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THE

THREE PERILS OF WOMAN;

A SERIES OF

DOMESTIC SCOTTISH TALES.

EDINBURGH:
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THE

THREE PERILS OF WOMAN;

OR,

Love, Leasing, and Jealousy.

A SERIES OF

DOMESTIC SCOTTISH TALES.

By JAMES HOGG,

AUTHOR OF "THE THREE PERILS OF MAN,"
"THE QUEEN'S WAKE," &c. &c.

88962

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

OF THE
BOMBAY

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The family sit beside the blaze.
But O, a seat is empty now!
JOHN GIBSON.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1823.

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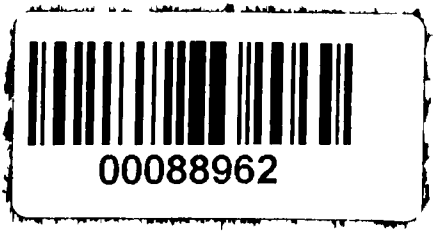

THE

THREE PERILS OF WOMAN.

PERIL FIRST.

Love.——Continued.

CIRCLE FIFTH.

"How do you affect this young gentleman, now that you have been long acquainted with him, daughter?" said Mrs Bell: "for I perceive that you are likely to have both him and these immense properties in your offer."

"Nay, how do you affect him, dear mother? You know I wont be either court-

ed or married without your consent, and I cannot have it here. For, tell me, have you not already given your consent to my wedding with your gallant nephew—nay, proffered me on him? And how can you, in conscience, propose another match, while that understanding remains in force?"

"I will take the responsibility of that on myself, daughter. He is a man to be used by us, not we by him. In the mean time, I want to know seriously how matters stand between you and this Squire M'Ion; for, during your fit, you raved of him without intermission, and in a strain of vehemence that almost frightened me."

"Oh me! did I speak of him when I was ill? But I did not know what I said then, so you need not mind that."

"But you were going to shew me a letter from him, which you have forgot."

"Oh no, indeed!—Not from him!—I never had a letter from him."

"I know, Gatty, that Jaggs brought you two letters, and that one of these had agitated you so much that it threw you in-

to a swoon. And, moreover, you were going to shew me that letter, when the unopened one from Mrs Johnson popped into your hand."

"Surely I had a letter," said Gatty, trembling, and fumbling about her pocket and clothes. "Surely I had a letter; but the contents of it are like a dream to me. No, the thing is impossible!—Did Jaggs say that he gave me two letters?"

"He did, he did. Where is the letter that made you scream out, and faint in the reading?"

"Surely I had a letter; but it is gone if I had," said Gatty. "If I had another letter, it was from cousin Cherry, and I am the most unfortunate and miserable being that has life. But I cannot believe it. I have no other letter; and must have had a strange dream about one when I was in a trance. *She* had a singular dream about a precipice of glass, the name of which was Love; but it was not that that was in my head; for, I think, I dreamed that Cherry Elliot was a bride, and that I was to be bride-maid,

and pull her glove, and walk with her to church.—Are you sure I received another letter by the post to-day?"

"Quite certain, child. Call the boy, he will inform you as he did me."

"No, I dare not ask him.—What time of the day is it?"

"It is dinner time. We shall have a walk in the afternoon."

"The letters will not yet be put into the post-office at Edinburgh. Oh, what a dreary time must elapse before they reach this! —Bring me my Bible, and suffer me to lie down; I am not very well. Could I but turn my mind to any thing but that!— Good Heavens! if the thing be possible, what a proud, precipitate, and wretched fool I have been! But I shall be the sufferer, and it is but justice that I should. I will go and lie down. I have often taken to my bed of late."

"Child, your behaviour, and the cause of your distress, are mysteries to me; and, between a mother and only daughter, such things should not be."

"It will all come to light time enough, dearest mother; all time enough, both for thee and me. I am a merchant, whose venture is all in one ship; and, when the gallant vessel is come within sight of the bay, the richest freight that eye ever greeted, I know of one shoal that must prove fatal to all my splendid hopes.—Can a promise of marriage be broken on the part of a gentleman?"

"No, no; on the part of a real gentleman it cannot. Have no fears about that."

"Then farewell, mother! I am going to sleep, and would to heaven that I never lifted my eyes again!"

Gatty threw herself on the bed, and turned her face to the wall; and, unmoved and unmoving as Mrs Bell's temper was, which was like a frozen sea, that suns cannot thaw nor storms ruffle, she was for a time rendered motionless. It was while trying to guess at the true circumstances of her daughter's case; but she could not, and went on in her usual way.

Old Daniel came in from the tup-park to a late dinner, still in high glee, pleased that in such hard times there had no addition been made to his family in the course of the day; but the parlour table stood uncovered, and the ladies were not there.

"Grizzy, ye muckle unfarrant besom! what for hae ye no set down the dinner?"

"Aw thought it was endless to clap down a dinner, till aw saw somebody to eat it. Aw never saw naebody at sic a speed as awm; for it's aye Grizzy this, an' Grizzy that, an' Grizzy every thing. Aw wuss somebody had Grizzy pinned up atween their een."

"What! for a pair o' spectacles, ye jaud? I think them that see through you will hae clear een."

"Aw kens some that wad see nocht o' their's there, the mair sheame to them."

"Come now, Grizzy, my sonsy woman, ye ken I darena encounter your wit, it is sae biting. But, in the first place, tell me what ye hae for dinner; in the second place, how lang we'll be o' getting it; and, in the third

place, where your auld and young mistresses are gane?"

"In the first pleace, than, ye sall get a haggis an' a hworn spoon; an' in the second pleace, gin ye dinna blaw it will burn ye; an' in the third pleace, the mistress an' the miss are at the auld trade o' baskets-meakin'. Now, aw thinks aw hae gi'en ye as good as ye gae."

"My certy, woman, but ye hae done that! Why, Grizzy, thou's a perfect razor, an' cuts through bane an' gristle. But what do you mean, ye collop, about baskets-making?"

"Whoy, what does aw mean? Ye ken that afore ane meakes baskets, he maun cut wands to be them?"

"Weel?"

"Weel; an', in cutting the wands, ane whiles cuts a finger."

"Weel, an' what then?"

"Whoy then the blood comes, an' it maun be rowed up wi' a clout.—Ha, ha, ha! aw thinks aw'll learn grit focks to snap wi' me!"

"You will sae; for siccan wit I never heard flee frae a pair o' lips. Pray drop it,

lovely maid, and let us mind the-ae thing needfu'. Is Gat quite better?"

"O na, na! Ower again; siching and sabbing as sair as ever. Some focks leykes the bed unco weel. But aw needsna tell you that; ower him an' ower him meakes a gude shear, an' focks maun fail some time."

"That wit o' yours has carried you quite up among the mist the day, Grizzy; I dinna understand a word o' your meaning."

"O, unco leykely! An the cat rin away wi' the haggis-bag i' the time o' the grace, where wull ye be than?—Are ye settled yet, measter? How's the pain i' your midriff? Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"That's what we get for joking wi' our servants," said Daniel, grumbling, as he went ben the house; "naething but impertinence. An I took mair o' the mistress's advice, I wad get mair honour."

His wife joined him at table, and they had a long consultation about their daughter's case, of which Daniel could not comprehend one item: for he still asserted, that "as long as she was free maid an' leal, he

wad laugh at a' ither stuff, about love, an' promises, an' siccan flirry-flarry; for an ane wadna anither wad, an' that made farms sae dear, an' toops sae cheap."

Gatty spent a restless and unhappy night and morning. To use a homely expression, she lay among nettles all the time; and her mother perceiving that a letter of some importance was expected, had got it settled with her daughter that she was to be made acquainted with the contents. She saw nought in Mrs Johnson's former letter that tended to aught but good; and, resolved to find out the source of her daughter's mental distress, she took care to be present both when the boy was dispatched to the post-office, and when he returned.

Two letters actually arrived; and one of them being directed to Miss Bell, her mother carried it up, and presented it to her in her little bed-chamber; for Gatty had been two or three times up and down that morning, and at that instant reclined on her bed dressed in her wearing apparel.

She took the letter with a smiling countenance, but it was almost the smile of vacancy that dilated the lovely and glowing features. With a trembling and hurried hand she opened the seal, cast her eyes rapidly from the head to the bottom of every page, and then, flinging it to her mother, she hid her head in the counterpane to listen. The old lady read as follows:—

"My dearest Child,

"Did I not say to you, that my happiness was too transcendant to be enjoyed without alloy? Alas! how shall I express to you my grief and disappointment! The union of my two children, that on which, of all earthly things, my heart was the most set, is strangely and fatally obstructed; so strangely, that it seems to have been the will of the Almighty to counteract it,—and that is all the plea of reconciliation to the disappointment which I have to offer either to my own heart or yours. What do you think, my improvident Gatty? From the first hour that my son knew you, you were

the sole object of all his love and all his ambition. There never was living man who loved with a more pure and ardent affection; and it was only from a full conviction of your settled and growing aversion, that he was of late reluctantly compelled to abandon the happy prospect, in which he had indulged, of an union with you. Would you believe it? I wept like a child, when, with tears in his manly eyes, he recounted to me the plans of life he had laid out, with you, and himself, and Joseph, united; and to think how all these have been blasted by a shy and maidenly misunderstanding, is enough to rend the misguided heart! When he saw that you had fled from his society, as a thing no longer to be borne, it seems he had begun to cast about for happiness elsewhere; and, taken with the unaffected kindness and childish simplicity of little Cherry, what does he, but, in the bitterness of disappointment, offer her his heart and his hand; which were at once accepted with gratitude, and without either a blush or a frown. He has promised her marriage im-

mediately, and the poor little innocent being is all on tiptoe expecting the wedding-day; so that, instead of my own darling, the pride and flower of the Lowland Border, the simple, half-witted, fortuneless Cherry Elliot is to be my daughter-in-law. The very idea is absolutely insufferable. I told him you loved him—loved him with an affection so ardent, that it had rendered you scarcely mistress of your words or actions, and that you were not accountable for them"——

"Is this true?" said Mrs Bell, laying the letter on her knee.

Gatty was so dreadfully agitated that she could not answer her.

"You have indeed been a silly girl, and acted the part of a fool," continued she.—"Love, fortune, and titles, all sacrificed for what?"

She lifted the letter, and went on:—

"I told him farther, that your heart would break; that—I knew it, from the ardour and warmth of your affection for him,—

you were incapable of supporting life without him.—'I would rather die myself,' said he, 'ere I violated the affections of that inestimable young lady. But what can I do? I would willingly lay down my life for her; but my honour is engaged, and I cannot lay down that.' "—

Gatty uttered a long and profound groan, and there is little doubt it was from the heart.

The letter went on:—

" 'Why did none of you tell me of this sooner? It has rendered me wretched for life! Let me act which way I will, I must now be wretched!'—'Cherry is a mere plaything,' said I; 'a creature so light, so thoughtless, and so volatile, that she will be as glad to be off with you to-day, as she was to be on with you the one preceding.'—'If I thought that,' said he.—'You may think so with safety,' added I. 'And is the life of Agatha Bell to be thrown away for a toy? Ah, my dear son, you must not think of it! The happiness, nay, the life of her you love, your own happiness, and that

of your only surviving parent, all depend on this one act of yours, and you must arouse your spirit to its accomplishment. Consider that, with Cherry's lightness of heart, the alteration in the arrangement can in nowise affect her;—and, consider the *injustice* you would do to Cherry, were you to marry her while your heart is wholly another's. It is absolute prostitution, and must not be thought of.'"——

Gatty turned herself twice over on the couch; and, rising up on her elbow, desired her mother to read these sentences over again.

The old lady complied, and added, that the worthy nurse was quite right, the thing was not to be thought of.

"God keep me from being selfish!" said Gatty. "Let me try to put myself in my cousin's place, and behave as I could wish her to behave to me: but one cannot help her heart's wishes.—I think, mother, I shall get up. I am wearying to be out, to get a lightsome walk."

"Do, my dear," said Mrs Bell. "But I have only a few lines to read; remain where you are till you hear the letter out."

She went on:—

"'It is absolute prostitution, and must not be thought of.'—When I said this, my dear son eyed me with a piteous look, and, groaning in spirit, said, 'Consider, my dearest friend and parent, that my word of honour is engaged,—my hand is pledged to an amiable child of nature. Bid me do any thing, but do not compel me to break my word of honour. How could I address poor Cherry, and tell her, that she must give up her claim, or that I had retracted? No, no! wretched I must be; but my kind and sweet little Cherry must not be kicked aside, and left to perish as a thing of no value!'—And with that he rose and left me; but he was so much moved, that my heart bled for him.

"I have begged of him to come and see you; to write to you; to write to your father; to Joseph;—in short, to do any thing to keep up the connexion with you, and

postpone the consummation of his arrangements with Cherry; but hitherto, as far as I can judge, I have entreated in vain.—What is to be the issue I cannot foresee, but I dread it will be nothing good. Be assured, my dear Gatty, you have always one sincere friend, who will never lose sight of your interests, or of your wronged affections for a moment.

"Yours ever, &c.

"AGNES M——."

"Well, child, how do you feel now in this dilemma?" said Mrs Bell.

"As one whose hope is utterly lost," replied her daughter. "I have now done with every thing in this world, one only excepted; and it is time I were turning my mind seriously to that."

"I think otherwise," rejoined the dame; "but if you had asked my advice, matters had never come to this pass. Still, I conceive, that, with a little coercion, your lover may be reclaimed. What is Cherubina Elliot, that *she* should be suffered to derange

the affairs of her betters? A toy! that we sent, at our own expense, to get a little education, and be a sort of a companion, or rather an upper waiting-maid to attend to you: and *she* to set up her baby-face to be an obstacle to the desires of so many people of quality! I will tell you what I think should be done with her. She should be well skelped with a pair of good taws, burnt on the tips, and sent home to her crazy mother. I'll write Mrs Johnson without delay, and order her to do so:—to yerk the fingers of the urchin till the blood follows the operation, and then to send her home with the carrier. Yes, I'll tell her to send her home with the carrier. *She* set up to be a bride, and unite the titles of M'— and Boroland in one, forsooth! I wish I had the taws in my own hand, or a good ducking of the monkey before her lover."

"Cease, dear mother," said Gatty, "and do not irritate me against my cousin. I feel I can hardly refrain from hating her, and it is neither my duty nor my right to do so. Yet I cannot say she is blameless,

for it was she who told my lover all my unguarded expressions, which provoked him so much—things that I uttered when I hardly knew what I said. You have now found out the latent cause of all my inconsistencies and disorders. I have behaved worse than a child, and it is but justice I should be the sufferer. Well, Cherry is the happy girl! what would I give this night to be the poor little friendless, fortuneless Cherry!"

"How can you say so, daughter? such a wish shews the meanness of your spirit. I declare that little cub—I have no patience with her!"

At this part of the colloquy they heard Daniel's foot coming thumping up the stair, and instantly he was with them. "What, in bed again, daughter?" said he. "I wish you had a good companion to keep you company in it, since you like it sae weel. But aha, lass! ye're no sae far forret as some o' your neighbours that you little think of. I hae braw news for ye the day. Hear siccan a letter as I hae gotten.—Hem!"

"DEAREST UNCLE,"—Hem!

"I wrote to my cousin the other day, and expected a letter back with the post-carrier, but it is not come, and I therefore address myself to you to let you know, that I am to be married as soon as I get your countenance, and my aunt's, and my cousin's consent to attend me. But O, dear uncle, you never heard such news as I have to tell you. That M'Ion, you know, who persecuted cousin so much with his love, that he made her fly the town, finding that he could not get her, has made love to me; and I once thought of staying till I took your advice; but you know I was an orphan, and unprovided, and I could not find in my heart to refuse him; so I took him at his word. Now, I wait but on my cousin coming in to be my best maid, for I cannot do without her, and I know she will enjoy my good fortune so much! And my aunt must also come in, and countenance me, and help me to buy my wedding-things; for though I must now be far above them in the world, and keep my coach and all that, yet they are above

me as yet, and I wish to pay them all the attention I can as long as I have it in my power."

All the time that Daniel had been reading, his dame kept making a chicking sound with her tongue by way of derision. But at this part she lost all patience; and, snatching at the letter, she tore a piece out of it; but he wheeled about with his shoulder to her, and kept his hold. "The chit! the baby! the impertinent little cub!" exclaimed she. "Heard any person ever the like of that? Give me the scrawl, Mr Bell. I say, give me that provoking hateful scrawl."

"What to do wi't, mistress?" said Daniel, turning still round as she advanced on him. "Stay till I read it out, and then light your pipe wi't, for aught I care. What ails ye at our poor fatherless niece's bit wedding letter, that it pits ye in sic a humstrumpery? Every ane for her ain hand, and Cherry Elliot for hers." He went on with the letter.—

"But, dear uncle, as I said, you never

heard such news! Is not this M'Ion, who is my betrothed bridegroom and husband"—

"I say, give me the letter, Mr Bell, that I may nip it to pieces and burn it."

"Pray do, dear father, burn it before you read farther."

Daniel turned his shoulder to them and went on.—

"M'Ion, who is my betrothed bridegroom and husband, Mrs Johnson's son—her own jectimate son? And he is turning out to be a lord, and a baron, and a knight, and a double chief, and has all the land in the place they call the Highlands. And I am to be his lady, the right honourable Lady M'——. Cherry Elliot, the poor widow's daughter at Gattonside, is to be the right honourable Lady M'——; and is not that very extraordinary, uncle?"

"Upon my word it is, niece," said Daniel, interrupting himself. "And I cannot say but I rejoice in it as much as if the fortune had fallen to our own family."

"Now, uncle, you must send in my aunt and cousin to me directly, for I cannot enjoy my fortune without mixing my joy with

theirs. And you must come yourself, good uncle Dan, and give me in marriage; and Joseph must come and wear the ribbons, and they shall be knotted with pease of silver and gold. Think not of the expenses by the way, for I will pay all the expenses; I have whole banks at my command. My lover has given me an order on the king's bank here for a thousand pounds, and I have lifted thirty shillings of it already. The king's great banker smiled as he gave me it, and said, 'Was I not feared I would soon get through my fortune if I drew such sums at a time?' I suppose these men are like all others, they do not like to part with money; but I'll astonish him some day, for I'll draw double the sum, though I should make him borrow it. Indeed, you know better about these things, but I wish my lover's money may be safe enough, for I think the man had to go into another room and borrow the money that he gave me.

"Now, I again charge you, uncle, that you must not neglect me. And if you cannot get from your tups, my aunt and cou-

sins must not neglect me; for they must think what honour I am bringing into the family, which, I assure you, I enjoy as much on your accounts, who were always high-looking people, as my own; and I know my dear aunt will enjoy the honour very much. You may tell her, that when I am married I am to ride with my husband in one coach, and our servants are to ride behind us in another coach, so that my very servants will be above her. So I hope she will think well of her affectionate niece, for bringing so much respect and riches to her house. I am very, very happy, uncle, but I cannot enjoy it without the company of yourself and the whole dear family.

"Your affectionate niece,

"CHERUBINA ELLIOT."

Daniel took off his spectacles and looked his spouse full in the face. There was nothing to be seen there but gloom, and rage, and despair. The equanimity of her cold still temper seemed to be ruffled, as Daniel had never seen it before, and the first thing

to which that irritation impelled her was to snatch the letter from him, and to tear and thrimble it to pieces, for fire there was none in the room. "Och! what's the matter?" said Daniel, rubbing his beard with the one hand, and giving his corduroy breeches a hitch up with the other. "I canna understand this! Come, mistress, you and Gat, ye see, maun make ready for your journey directly."

"Must I, indeed, Mr Bell! And if I *do* go, it shall be to whip the urchin with a pair of leathern taws, and send her home to her daft mother yammering and blubbering like a truant school-girl as she is. *She* a bride! a right honourable! and ride in her coach, and her servants above me! The maggot! The mite of a Gattonside cheese! How I'll yerk her and ycther her! for the house she lives in is my own!"

"Hout!" said Daniel, "that will never do. A bride, ye ken, she is. If none of you will go and countenance my little Cherry, I'll gang mysel."

"Mr Bell, are you not a dunderpate?

Did you ever see farther in your life than the tail of a tup?"

"Ay, by my certy, have I, mistress! Shew me the man that will measure ane better wi' his ee frae the bob o' the tail to the tip of the nose, an' a' at ae look too!"

"But, for all that, Mr Bell, you do not see that this minx, Cherry, has undermined you and me, and all of us; and filched the fortune and the titles that of right should have been our daughter's."

"I dinna see that at a', mistress; that depends entirely on the man's fancy that the fortune an' titles belang to. I say again, as Tammy Laidlaw said o' the toop, 'Tammy,' said I, 'ye hae gotten fairly the better in that cut, ye maun gie me up that good toop again.' 'Na, na, friend,' says he, 'I want to tak the advantage o' nae man alive; but when I get the advantage fairly an' honestly, d—n me but I'll keep it!' So say I of my poor friendless niece; since the gentleman has thought proper to slight our saucy miss, an' bestow a' that greatness on her cousin, I canna see how

she is to blame in accepting o't. It's never lost that a friend gets."

"That has been your mode all your life, Mr Bell, else you might have been the richest commoner on the Border—to slubber every thing over that related to your own interest, above a tup, and a dose of whisky toddy."

Daniel set up his hat behind, put both his hands into his waistcoat pockets, and, seizing the waist-band of his breeches through them, he went out of the room whistling, "When the sheep were in the fauld," very loud. But his spouse had not done with him. She seized him by the angle of the arm, and in a soothing manner besought him to stay, and she would let him see the matter in a new light. He complied, and she read him Mrs Johnson's last letter, making many sapient remarks on every sentence. Daniel listened with great attention; and when he found that his daughter really was the best beloved, and that the breaking off of this grand match had originated in some misconception, he gave a great

grumph; made his eyes reel round all the ceiling of the little chamber; took a quid of tobacco, and spit furiously on the carpet. "Mr Bell, that is perfectly intolerable," said his spouse.

"Weel, gang on, mistress. Never mind," said Daniel, and thrust his hands into his waistcoat-pockets. When she had concluded, he gave another grunt, and added, "It's rather a hard case this, mistress; but I think I could manage it an it warna ae thing. What is to become o' poor Cherry, wi' a' her wedding braws, an' her order on the Royal Bank? Confound it, it will never do. Things maun just take their course."

"Cherry!" exclaimed the dame; "let her be whipped for her presumption, say I."

"Na, na, mistress," cried Daniel, "nane of your sklatching in a case of this kind. The waur you guide her, the mair is he bound in honour to protect her. I hae another scheme than that, which, I think, canna miss. I wonder gin this M'Ion kens ought at a' about the value of a breed of toops? Na, na, mistress, ye needna gape an' glowr

an' haud up your hands. The doubling or tripling of a Highland gentleman's yearly income is nae flee to be casten to the wa'! I'll take in hand to do it, or my name is not Daniel Bell;" and with that he pulled his right hand from his vest pocket, heaved it above his head as he spoke, spit out his quid of tobacco altogether, and came a knock on the little dressing-table that frightened all the crows from about the mansion, for they thought it was the shot of a gun. "An' mair than that, mistress, I'll settle a bit handsome portion on my niece, that she may not miss a venture awthegither; an' *wha* is it that says that's no a mair feasible application to a disappointed bride than a pair o' taws burnt hard at the ends?" Then in the pride and plenitude of his wisdom, Daniel gave the table another blow; made his eyes goggle once more round the ceiling, and put his hand again into his waistcoat-pocket. His wife reasoned long and clearly on the subject, but Daniel heard nothing of what she said, so full was his head of his own grand projects, and victory; for after

she had spoken a very reasonable time, all the answer he made was,—" D—d nonsense thae taws! The toops an' tocher for me." With that he departed out of the room, crooning, as he went, " Ca' the ewes to the knowes;" for all Daniel's songs and tunes were those of a pastoral description, but of those he had a goodly share, such as they were.

" Now, rise and take your walk, daughter, and let us digest what next is to be done," said Mrs Bell. " For as to your father, he will scheme and contrive; and then go whistling his tune, and admiring his tups, without moving a jot farther in the business."

" I cannot enter into any farther scheme," said Gatty, " nor can I rise to-day. I hope I shall never rise from this bed again."

" There is little fear of that," said her mother. " I am happy you take it so resignedly, without these violent fainting-fits."

" These are all over now," said Gatty. " I am resigned to my fate. I will do no-

thing against my poor cousin; for it is I who deserve to suffer, and not she. My hope is lost,—utterly lost; and with this plain assurance before my eyes, my heart is broken. I give up all the maddening vanities of this world;—a first love, with all its pains and jealousies. And now, dearest mother, if you would give me heart's-ease, speak to me of the world that is yet to come."

Mrs Bell was not very good at that. She commended religion, but she had not much to say anent it, being better at vending long abstract rules of prudence and economy. She, therefore, tried first to jest off her daughter's hopeless despair, and afterwards to reason it off, but without producing the least effect. The victim of love remained sunk in apathy, and declared that she would never rise from that bed. "Since I cannot have him with honour," said she, "I give him up; and if you knew how I have loved, you might then have some idea of the pangs I suffer in rending his image from my bosom. Oh, could I but this day repent

as heartily of my sins, as I do of my behaviour to him! but to do that of myself is impossible; all other feelings melt before the intensity of that regret, which wrings and gnaws this poor heart without intermission. All that I now have to beg of you, mother, is, that you will not torment me farther by speaking of that which can only give me pain, or by meddling any farther with it; for, as the case now stands, no intermeddling can bring it to good."

Mrs Bell walked about the house in her usual stately and sailing way, giving orders about this and that; yet her heart was far from being at ease about her daughter, who was going to give up love, fortune, and honours, at one throw. But that was not the worst; for she felt that her skin was become moist and warm, and her pulse fallen into a quick, fluttering, and intermittent motion, and these were symptoms that agreed too well with her daughter's asseverations. When all the rest retired to sleep, therefore, the careful matron sat up, and wrote a long letter to Mrs Johnson, visiting her

daughter's couch at regular intervals, but saying nothing of what she had been writing. She neither, however, ordered Mrs Johnson to whip Cherry, nor to send her home with the carrier; but she stated to her her darling's case, and the effect that the news of her lover's marriage had made on her health, copying her own words, that her heart was broken, and that she would never again lift her head from that couch, from the day he was wedded to another. She then adverted to the great joy and happiness that such a connexion with her, (Mrs Johnson,) would confer on them all, and conjured her, as she valued all their well-beings both in this world and the next, to urge her utmost influence in breaking off the one match, and furthering the other. No pains were to be spared. No stone left unturned. No fortune refused to Cherry that she or her crazy mother thought proper to ask. The letter is too long and formal to be copied, but that was the substance of it.

Alas for poor little Cherry! Who will

not pity her, with such power and influence against her, and no one on her side? Had her lover's heart been fixed, she would then have been safe, but unluckily that had been early devoted to another. Ah love! Into what mazes of grief dost thou lead lovely woman, without whose angelic form and eye thou thyself had'st never had a name, nor beauty a term whereby to distinguish it!

The next post brought the following letter to Mrs Bell.—

"My dear Friend and Benefactress,

"I needed not your letter to put me on the alert in frustrating this unlucky affair, and in promoting the alliance between my brave, my matchless son, and your daughter, for my heart was as much set on it before as it was possible to be. I have fought a hard battle for you, and I think I have prevailed; but it has been a heart-breaking business, and I shall hardly forgive myself for the part I have acted as long as I live. I must give you the particulars, and then

you may judge of the event.—In the first place, I entreated, I conjured my son, as he valued his peace of mind, not to throw away his first love; assuring him, that her precious life was at stake. It was impossible for man to be in a more miserable situation than he was, between his engagement to simple and unsuspecting innocence on the one hand, and strongly rooted affection on the other, and my heart pitied him; nevertheless, I pressed him without forbearance to the course I judged the most proper. In the mean time, Cherry was never from his side; and such looks of gratitude and affection I never saw cast from one human being to another. Her eye watched his continually; and when his chanced to turn on her, she neither blushed nor looked down, but met his glance with a smile so full of love, joy, and benevolence, that it pierced my soul with sorrow to think of the critical verge on which she stood. I knew that my son was incapable of mentioning a separation to her, perhaps even of giving assent to it; and, therefore, as a

last resource, I resolved to take the hard task on myself.

" ' Well, Cherry,' said I, ' so it seems you purpose becoming my daughter-in-law one of these days? Why did you never inform me of this?'

" She answered with great readiness, and as much propriety, ' Because, you know, I thought that did not belong to me. I informed my own mother and near relations, and left Mr M'Ion to inform his or not as he liked.'

" ' But, dear Cherry,' said I, ' do you really presume to become a lady of quality, and act a part among the first nobility of the land?'

" ' It is no presumption of mine,' returned she very readily. ' The plan and the proposal came from one whom I thought a better judge of gentility than either you or me.'

" This poignant answer gave me rather a better edge for proceeding, and I said, ' My dear Cherry, I am sorry to inform you that you can never be my son's bride. I am per-

fectly sincere; the thing is impossible.' If you had seen how she looked in my face! What amazement was in that look, mixed with a little offended pride! Still her answer was not wanting. 'It may be so,' said she; 'but I will take nobody's word for that but his own.'

"'You may take my word for it, dear Cherry,' said I; 'I know that it would be madness in me to tell you aught but the truth in this, which is, that his heart was betrothed to another, and it was only in the chagrin of imaginary disappointment that he made a rash offer of his hand to you, which was accepted ere ever he had time to reflect on the consequences.'

"The colour then began to part from her lips, and her cheek grew pale. 'I knew so much before,' said she; 'for he was too candid not to tell me that he *had* loved another better. But I thought that was all over; and it was to please *him* that I took him at his offer. Whenever he likes to cast me off, to oblige him I'll submit to

it cheerfully, but only on the condition that he is to let me love him all my days.'

"How glad was I that my son did not hear these words! If he had, the whole world would not have made him cast off Cherry. But I am cruel. My heart is adamant, when set on obtaining a desirable purpose, else I never could have stood this. I could not speak, but I took her little hand and kissed it. 'Ah! I see you are going to relent and let me keep him,' said she, with a pathos that is inexpressible, save from lips so simple.

"'The thing is utterly impossible,' said I. 'His heart is otherwise engaged; and it would be the most flagrant injustice to you, were he to give you his hand, while his heart is devoted to another.'

"'I will take my chance of that,' said she. 'His heart can never be any thing but kind to me. Who can it be that he loves so much better than me?'

"'All concealment is now vain,' answered I. 'It is your cousin, Miss Bell, who has the sole possession of his heart.'

"'I suspected as much!' said she with great vivacity; 'but then I love him a thousand times better than she, so the quantity of love will still be made up between us. I'll not give him up to her; for she despises him, and has used him vilely. I *will not* give him up for one who disdains him.'

"'So far from that being the case,' said I; 'the news of your espousals have affected her so deeply, that she has taken to her bed, and is very ill; and her mother writes me that she is afraid she cannot survive it.'

"The good creature's countenance altered again into a shape of the deepest sorrow. 'Ah! mercy on me! that's terrible,' exclaimed she. 'My dear cousin does not deserve that at my hand, for she has always been a good friend to me; and it was she that made her parents first take notice of me, when I was very low indeed. I cannot kill my cousin. But I hope, after all, it is only a fit of chagrin at my good fortune. She was rather apt to take the pet whiles, and go to her bed. But I need not

say that. I find too well how I could bear it myself. Poor Gatty, I cannot kill her!'

"I then read to her that part of your letter which related to your daughter's illness, and her own words, that 'she had laid down her head on her pillow, and should never lift it again, after her lover became the possession of another.' 'So that you see, my dear girl,' added I, 'if you persist in holding my son at his word, which he never will break, you will be the murderer both of your cousin and him. How could ever you be happy, or how could he be happy with you, and such a crime upon your heads!' Then, for the first time, she fell a sobbing deeply, and the tears rolled in her large blue eyes, but did not drop. 'I see how it is,' said she.—'I am forsaken. I am just now like a young bird, that some vagrant boy has reaved from the nest, and after carrying it far away from its parents, he finds a richer covey, tires of the poor little orphan, and flings it away to shift for itself, a prey to any hawk or buzzard that likes to kill it. Well, well! He shall buy

me a yellow gown, the true forsaken colour; and pull me a willow-flower to wear for his sake. I wonder, if he were Gatty Bell's husband, if I might love him?'

"I could hardly speak; but I said, 'Yes, Cherry, you *shall* love him, and he shall love you too.'

"'Ah! but then I cannot love him as I do now,' said she; 'else it would be a sin. And if he *would* love me, Gatty would not let him. I could be content with any share of his heart, for it is more than I ever deserved; but I am afraid she knows the value of it too well to suffer me to share it with her.'

"'You can always love and caress him as a brother,' said I; 'and he will love you as a sister, far more dearly than it is possible for him ever to do as his wife, circumstanced as he now is.'

"'Well, well!' said she; and then the tears burst from her eyes in torrents, although her tongue scarcely faltered as she spoke. 'Well, well! My resolution is ta-

ken. I do not know if she, or any one, would do as much for me.'

" I put my arm about her neck and tried to sooth her, by telling her, that she should have a fortune settled on her that should render her independent. But she cut me short, by saying, that any fortune that would have the effect of making her independent of *him* would only add to her misery; and that she would spurn it. Then she interrupted herself, ' Ah! but I had forgot, he must forgive me the sum that I lifted from the king's banker in his name, for I am so poor I cannot repay it.'

" ' My dear ingenuous girl,' I replied, ' take no thought about such a trifle; for I promise you on my honour, that you shall have liberty to draw on the king's banker as long as you live; and that for any sum that you may either require for yourself, your mother, or little brothers.'

" ' That will indeed be a great matter, on their account,' said she, ' for I told them I was going to be a great lady, and would

provide for them all; but disappointments never come single-handed.'

"At that moment, who should come in but my son himself, all unconscious of what had been going on? My blood ran cold to think of the scene that was likely to take place; and in what way the painful subject would be introduced between them. But Cherry soon put an end to my perplexity on that score. The little elf is absolutely a heroine. There is something in the constitution of her mind capable of being raised to a height that would render her one of the first order of mortal beings. She rose at his approach, as she always does, and extending her hand to him with a smile of the utmost benevolence and good nature, said to him, 'Ah! Mr M'Ion! I am so glad that you are come just now, for I have a request to make of you. You are to buy me a yellow gown with green trimmings, and green and yellow ribbons for my hair. These are the true colours for forsaken damsels, you know, Mr M'Ion; and you are to pull me a sprig of the weeping willow,

too, to twine with these ribbons. I'll not have a green leafy sprig, but one of the early yellow buds that hang down their heads, and nod and fade so soon. They are likest myself. Now, will you promise to get all these for me, Mr M'Ion ?'

" ' Certainly I will, my love,' said he, ' once you *are* forsaken. But who could have the heart to forsake so much sweetness and innocence ?' With that he drew her to his side as he sat down, thinking she was toying with him ; for she said it all with so much ease of manner that he had no suspicions of the trial to which she alluded.

" ' You once told me,' rejoined she, looking in his face with the most perfect serenity, ' that you had loved another better than me ; but you did not tell me that you *still* loved another better, and had rued your promise to me.' His colour changed as she said these words, and he appeared in the utmost distress. ' It would have been cruel to have informed you of this, my loved Cherry,' said he, ' and yet you must have come to the knowledge of it all too soon, if not also

too late. I have, indeed, rendered myself wretched; but my sentiments of love and esteem for you are, and ever shall be, the same; and, as for my promise to you, that shall remain inviolate till the day of my death.'

"'So you neither have rued on me, nor broken your word to me?' said she, with the same resolute equanimity. 'But, hark, and I'll tell you a piece of strange news. I have both rued my promise to you, and broken it. Nay, you are not to look so distressed, for I cannot stand that. I know the whole case; and think you I do not study the happiness of some others more than my own?' As she said these words she drew the Bible to her, merely as if she had done so mechanically, without knowing what she did, and opening it somewhere about the writings of the evangelists, she continued speaking; for she seemed afraid that he should begin before her purpose was fully made manifest. 'See! Do you see this holy book in my hand?' continued she. 'Before Him, and by Him, who dictated

the words of this good book, with my hand upon its most sacred page, I swear never to give you my hand in wedlock as long as Agatha Bell is living; and all the world shall not make me break this oath.' We both sat still in utter consternation at the heroism of this simple child of nature, without saying a single word. 'Come now, give me your hand as a friend,' continued she, 'as a betrothed lover no more. That is over. And give me a kiss into the bargain; it shall be the last I shall ever ask *but one*.'

"Never did I behold any thing so transcendant as the whole demeanour of that extraordinary girl on this trying occasion; and, by the way in which my son took her in his arms and embraced her, I could easily perceive that he was about to follow her example, by also entering into some rash vow. Therefore, I diverted it by taking Cherry in my arms, and embracing her in my turn; commending her for the sacrifice she had made of riches and honours for the happiness of others; and forthwith proposed, that my son, having no sisters of his own, should

adopt her as a beloved sister, and protect and cherish her for life as his second self. 'For, Diarmid,' said I, addressing him, 'you are not yet aware of the sacrifice she has made.'

"'I would sacrifice a thousand times more for his peace and comfort,' said she, 'were that possible, but it is now out of my power. I first gave up myself for what I conceived to be his happiness; but now for the same object I have given up him; and, compared with that sacrifice, riches, honours, and the whole world, are to me as nothing.'

"Thus ended the most affecting scene I ever witnessed between two lovers, and I am still uncertain how matters will bear through. She watches him with her eye the same as ever, but her looks seem to be altered. Yet she talks decidedly of accompanying him to Bellsburnfoot, and seeing her dear friends, since they will not come to see her, and of being her cousin's best maid. So I think, if matters take no other turn, we shall be with you in a day or two. Forgive this

large packet, which has cost me near a night and a day in inditing.—I could not give it up; and while it was fresh in my mind I thought it proper to let you know what we all owe to little Cherry, should our future prospects turn out according to our hopes. I remain

"Your ever grateful
"AGNES M'———."

"P. S.—Call my son still by his former name. Every one will do so till his rights and titles are fairly made out. These are not so much as to be disputed, his uncle's counsel having given up the plea on the production of the documents.

"A. M."

The effect that the reading of this epistle produced on the family group at Bellsburnfoot may be conceived. The ladies apparently felt mortified at the resolute behaviour of Cherry; and, though they spoke kindly of her, it is probable they wished she would remain at a distance from them.

Not so old Daniel; he expressed himself in the most rapturous terms of approbation he was master of, on the heroic conduct of his niece. "I kend she was a fine lassie, my little Bieny," cried he; "shame light on the tongue that wad speak o' taking the taws to siccan a good creature! Let me see whan ane o' you will do sic a deed. Either you wi' a' your sees and your saws, mistress, or your daughter wi' her skirlin fits of love, that amaist gart me trow ae thing was twae. But I'll cleed my little niece a' wi' the silk for this; and gin the callant, Joe, likes to take her, he shanna want a bit tocher wi' her. For th[illegible]gh her minny was a crazy limmer, and [illegible] away frae me wi' a red-wud Elliot, little [illegible]ieny has some o' the blood o' the Bells in her for a' that."

For the ensuing three days there were no letters, which made the Bells conclude that the party would to a certainty be with them; and within doors there was a good deal of bustle and preparation, so that honest Daniel could not get any body to speak a word to, save fat Grizzy, the kitchen-woman, (for

the Border farmers, very properly, never style any of their servants maids,) and Davie Shiel, the ewe-herd. The one broke her incomprehensible wit on her master, and the other would have talked about tups with him from morn to even.

"Grizzy, my sonsy lass, come an' gie me a lift wi' the toop-heck; it's on the wrang side o' the dyke sin' the wind changed."

"Na, na; ye may get ilka ane o' them a wife to beild him. They wad maybe lie on the wrang side o' them too, like somebody that aw kens. Like draws aye to like, as the deil said to the blackamoor; an that be the case, ae toop might gie another a lift."

"Come away, come away, when I bid ye. I'm no disposed for a jaw just now."

"Ir ye no? The water might be cauld for your lugs sae soon i' the day. He's a poor laird wha has naething but tripes an' puddings to pride himsel o'."

"What are ye jaunderin about, ye haverel?"

"Aw has seen a greater haverel ca' a

meer out o' the corn though, an' ca' down the tether-stake too. Take ye that, Maister Bell."

"Come away, like a good lass. I'll no keep ye frae your house-wark aboon ten minutes."

"Some focks might do a great deal in ten minutes; but aw thinks aw may gang wi' *you*, gin ye'll promise to mind me in your prayers."

"That I will, that I will; provided ye'll tell me what to pray for."

"O, aw joost prays aye for three things. D'ye tak me up?"

"Brawly, brawly."

"Aw joost prays aye to be keepit frae the men, the de'il, an' a breed o' toops. Focks soudna sin their mercies ye ken, maister.—Gude mornin' t'ye, sir.—An little dogs hae the langest tails, what's to come o' the maskis?"

Grizzy went off giggling, and left her master; for Daniel's servants stood little in awe of him. He spit out his quid, cursed her heartily, and then, bursting out a laugh-

ing, he went out to his tups, whistling "Tarry woo." Such colloquies were occurring at Bellsburnfoot every hour of the day.

One evening as Mrs Bell and Gatty were walking by the burn side, they beheld the Pringleton postchaise leave the turnpike, and come lumbering up the cart-road. The two ladies made for home as fast as they could; but Gatty's limbs failed her so much, that her mother had almost to drag her in. When there, she had every appearance of fainting, for her colour went and came as quick as the passing shadows of the clouds over the mountains, when the rack of heaven flies quickest on the wind.

"I shall never gather courage to meet him again," said she, "after the way in which I have behaved. I followed the course which I thought became the dignity of my sex, but there never was one who exposed its weakness so much. Dearest mother, what shall I do? for I feel I cannot look him in the face."

"Why, child, you have shewn too much of that shyness already, which has been to

make up again with interest," said the dame. "Drop it now for ever; and meet him with open arms, as an old and beloved acquaintance, taking no notice of any thing that has befallen, till an explanation fall in naturally of its own accord."

Gatty approved of the advice, but was unable to put it in practice. When the sound of the coach-wheels fell on her ears she was obliged to retire; but in a few minutes Cherry had her in her arms. There was no reserve of kindness and generosity in Cherry's whole disposition; they flowed so freely that they ran beyond their supply. Gatty returned her embrace with great affection; but as soon as Cherry's eyes fixed on her cousin's face, she started back, still gazing at her, exclaiming with great fervour, "Ah! I have indeed not been deceived! you have suffered much more than was represented to me. Such a change, in so short a time, I never beheld!"

"I was just about to make the same remark of you," said Gatty in return; "I

think your looks greatly altered for the worse."

"Me! I never was so well in my life, nor so merry, nor so happy. Believe me, cousin, you have taken a load of greatness from my shoulders that would have crushed me to nothing."

"Dearest Cherry, how shall I ever repay your generosity? I am utterly ashamed of it."

"Ay, but your generosity to me began first, cousin. A body that studies no one's happiness but her own, does not deserve that any friend should study her's. Think you, I will not be happier as I am, seeing you all so happy, than if I had proved a mere selfish creature? But indeed you did very wrong in leaving us: Ah, you did indeed. You do not yet know the extent of the evil, but you will know it ere long. I—I mean, because *he* did not deserve such treatment at your hands, that's all."

Mrs Johnson at this moment came in, and stopped farther remarks on that delicate point.

It would be endless to recount all that passed among these attached friends; but the meeting of the two lovers, after so long a misunderstanding, was truly affecting. It is impossible for me to delineate the embarrassment of Gatty's looks, or the poignancy of the feelings that warred in her bosom, where love, shame, and gratitude, were all in motion. His behaviour to her was marked with that deference and respect by which it had always been distinguished; till, by degrees, the reserve wore off, and then the two indulged in the fullest enjoyment of mutual love.

Cherry's manner was so marked with hilarity, either real or affected, that her disappointed hopes scarcely seemed to mar their cup of bliss. Daniel's attentions to her were unintermitted. He caressed her more than he did all the rest of his family put together; and not being able to contain his grand project in her favour, he told her, that he intended her for his daughter-in-law, by bringing about a marriage between her and his son Joseph. Mrs Bell cast her head

very high at this without any farther remark; but the theme served Cherry for many an apparently merry hour with Joseph, when mirth was far from her heart. She contrived to keep up that or some joke incessantly; yet, at times, when the lovers were walking by themselves, she would sometimes cross her hands and sigh; and then she could not refrain from always going to the window, and looking out after them. On their return into the house, M'Ion never failed to caress her, toying with her, and calling her his sister; thereby pouring the only balm of consolation on her wounded heart that was in his power to bestow, and kindling her sunken eye with a beam of delight. These beams on her countenance were always as brilliant as they were short lived, for, alas! they were tasted with a bitter alloy.

Every explanation having been previously extracted by letter, the obvious progress of events was perfectly apparent, and perfectly understood between the two lovers. There were no preliminaries to be agreed upon save

one, which Daniel judged to be incumbent on himself, namely, the doubling of his son-in-law's income; and M'Ion was actually bored, night after night, with dissertations on the value of different breeds of tups, till there is little doubt of his joining most fervently in a portion of fat Grizzy's prayer.

I know of no topic so utterly disgusting to people not interested in it; yet, over a part of Scotland, I will defy a stranger to hear aught else at a social meeting. Converse with our hinds and shepherds, you will find men willing to communicate, and anxious to learn; but with the store-farmers, it is *tups*, lambs, crock-ewes, and prices, without end, and without mitigation. I would rather sit in a cottage, with an old wife smoking tobacco, and listen to Ralph Erskine's Gospel Sonnets.

CIRCLE SIXTH.

THE wedding-day at length arrived, and Dr Kid came up well-powdered to Bellsburnfoot, where a number of genteel associates were collected, to wish the young chief and his lady much joy, and dine with them.

There was nothing particular happened that day, save that the bride-maid seemed peculiarly absent and thoughtful, caring for nothing, and attending to nothing. What were the secret workings of her heart it is hard to say. Perhaps she had still cherished some feeble spark of hope, that, through the workings of an inscrutable Providence, M'Ion might yet be her own; perhaps it was some hard reflection that Mrs Bell had thrown out to her in private; or perhaps it was some inward malady preying on her vitals. But certain it was, that,

from that day, her manner changed from the height of apparent gaiety to a sedate and languid thoughtfulness.

During the time of the momentous ceremony, when the Doctor desired the parties to *join hands*, Cherry, being principal bridemaid, was standing at the bride's left hand, like a small comely statue of Corinthian marble, as pale and as motionless.

"Join hands," said the Doctor.

Gatty turned her right hand across her bosom that her cousin might draw her glove, but Cherry took no notice of it. A pause ensued in the ceremony; which Cherry never so much as perceived, but kept her still and statue-like position.

"The parties will please to join hands," repeated the Doctor.

M'Ion's hand was already extended: the bride gave her maiden a quick tap on the arm to remind her of her duty; Cherry started as from a dream, but, instead of pulling off her cousin's glove, she stretched out her hand to put it into the bridegroom's. That hand did not open to receive hers.

Poor little Cherry's hand was turned aside; and the bride, ashamed of the delay on her part, was obliged to pull off her own glove with her left hand, and finally gave her hand to her lover, and with it herself for ever.—Cherry clasped her hands together, cowered down, and looked in their faces; then, again assuming her upright position, her eyes rolled about from one face to another so rapidly as to shew that her mind was bewildered. These looks spoke as plainly, as if she had said in words, "Where are we? what have we been about?"

Was it indeed true, that Cherry's generosity had outrun her capability? That she had exerted it to a degree, in favour of those she loved, that she was no longer able to sustain? If she indeed assumed all that gaiety to lull asleep every anxiety in the breasts of the two lovers on her account, it was a stretch of generosity almost unequalled in the interminable annals of love.—That exertion to conceal her real sentiments was a thing so opposite to her downright truthful nature, that it must have cost her

much. But, now that it was no longer necessary, she was weary of it; and the next day after that of the bridal, she made herself ready, and manifested her desire of going home to her mother. She best knew, and she only knew, the state of her internal feelings, and she felt that she was sinking into a state that would render her presence a great drawback on the happiness of the young couple, therefore she entreated her uncle to let her return home.

Daniel declared off in a moment. "He would rather part with his whole family, Duff's seven sons and altogether, before he parted with his dear little daughter Bieny; for his daughter she *should* be, whether she became Joseph's wife or not. Now that he had in a manner lost Gatty, he could not live without a daughter, and he would not live without one; and he would let them a' see, that she should be the best tochered lass o' the twa."

"What you say, and what you propose, is all very proper, Mr Bell," said his cautious and selfish dame. "You have a right

to protect Miss Elliot, because, you know, she's your sister's daughter"——

"An' hae I nae mair powerfu' right nor that?" cried Daniel fiercely, interrupting her.

"Not that I perceive, sir," said Mrs Bell with the utmost mildness and suavity of manners; "for as to the promise of marriage, that the young people have been pleased to make a great deal about, why, you know, if Miss Elliot felt herself injured in the slightest degree, she could have pursued for damages."

"Heard ever ony mortal soul the like o' that?" exclaimed Daniel: "Od, woman, ye wad provoke a saunt!—When ye hear me say I'll part wi' *you*, or wi' this or that ordinary thing, that's neither here nor there; but when I say I'll part wi' my seven best toops afore I part wi' sic or sic a thing, ye may be sure I'm serious then."

"Well, a most beautiful and concise explanation you have given, Mr Bell," returned she; "and that brings me to what I was going to say; which was, that although

there is no person whom we like so well to have about the house as Miss Elliot,—no person whatever,—yet, if she have urgent and private motives for going home, I see no right you have to detain her."

"Never speak to me, woman! Ye're enough to pit a body mad," cried Daniel, spitting on the grand dining-room carpet. "I tell ye aince for a', that my Bieny is never gaun to be a Gattonside lady ony mair. I'll gar her haud up her head wi' the best o' the land yet."

During this bold asseveration, Mrs Bell rung, and desired Grizzy to bring a cloth and wipe the carpet.

"Aih me! aw thinks we'll haurdly ken the track o' a foumart frae that o' a hare shune," said Grizzy, and cast a triumphant glance at her master as she left the room.

Cherry still persisted in her resolution, which was nothing weakened by the hints that fell from her aunt, until M'Ion and his bride entered, who soon turned the scale in Daniel's favour. Gatty requested her to remain, and accompany her to church, and

on some visiting expeditions; and M'Ion brought forward an arrangement that was to take up a whole season, of a journey through the Highlands as far as Skye, the party to return by Boroland, and remain there till the beginning of the winter, which they were to spend in Edinburgh. In all these arrangements, he said, he had made up his mind that his loved sister Cherry was to bear a part; and he would not only be disappointed but offended if she refused him. She had no power to refuse M'Ion any thing. A hint from him was to her a supreme law, as it was become indeed to every one about Bellsburnfoot. Old Daniel said no more about detaining his little new daughter, nor Mrs Bell about parting with her; so Cherry yielded to the bridegroom's plan without expostulation, but, at the same time, it was with a rueful smile, as much as to say, that he had made many kind arrangements that would never be accomplished.

The mistake that she committed at the marriage, of offering her hand to the bride-

groom in place of drawing the bride's glove, was mentioned to her privately by Mrs Johnson; for though that worthy lady was now Lady-Dowager M'——, yet, for uniformity's sake, we shall denominate her by her old name to the end of the narrative. Cherry did not remember having done it, but was greatly shocked at her behaviour; and said she could not account for her inadvertency otherwise, than by having thought so often about going through that ceremony herself with *him*. "It was a thing that constantly haunted my mind," said she, "with a mixture of terror and boundless delight, and I was always thinking and thinking how I should get through it. So, you see, I had somehow forgot myself, and thought I was acting the part I had so often contemplated.—But that never had been to be," added she, with a deep sigh; "and I had aye some bodings within me that it never would."

Mrs Johnson turned away her face, wiped a tear from her eye, and changed the subject.

The journey to the Highlands was deferred from day to day, and from week to week, no one said positively why, though doubtless some perceived the reason. The hilarity at Bellsburnfoot died gradually away after the wedding, till at length it subsided into a sedate melancholy gloom. It was in vain that Daniel invited jovial neighbours, pushed the bottle at even, and tried jokes about lasses' tochers, and stocking the Highlands with young M'Duffs; the shade of melancholy that pervaded the family was so apparent, that he could not even keep his company together; and long before bedtime, on such evenings, he had often no other amusement, than sitting at the parlour fire by himself, turning a quid, about five inches long, from one cheek to the other, and squirting in the grate,—or, at times, by a great exertion to keep up his spirits, crooning a stave of "Tarry woo," or "The Tup of Durham." Daniel could perceive nothing wrong, honest man; but, for all that, he found himself involved in an atmosphere of gloom that had something in

it contagious, and could not help making the remark, that "they looked a' rather as if they had had a burial at his house in place of a bridal."

There was indeed much looked, but little thing said at Bellsburnfoot for a good space at that time; a circumstance that puzzled both the neighbouring gentry, and the servants of the family. All were eager to know something of the cause; but none could learn any thing, save what Davie Shiel, the ewe-herd, wrung from fat Grizzy, the witty kitchen-woman; and we doubt if our readers will be much enlightened by what passed between these worthies, although it proved matter of abundant rumours in the district.

"Od sauf us! Grizzy, woman, what ails our master? I never saw him gang as aften wi' his hands in his pouches, an' his hat cockit up ahint, a' my life. An' then, instead o' looking at his toops or his ewes, (an', though I say't, there's no a better hirsel i' the coontry,) he's aye gaun looking o'er his shoulders as he had lost something."

Maybe sae he has, mun. Aw has kend a body lose a filly an' find a foal afore now."

"Dear Grizzy, d'ye see aughts wrang about the family, or about this grand match?"

"Ey; aw sees better out at the hole o' my neck than some focks that aw kens dis out at their lookin' feaces."

"What d'ye see, Grizzy?"

"Aw sees mair that soudna be seen than a eel dis in a doock dub. An ye war a miller's naig, whether wad ye eat out o' the sack ye were tied to, or the ane neist it?"

Davie began to cock his ears at these two short sentences. "That depends on what stuff was in the two sacks," said he, answering to the point, in order to keep Grizzy likewise to it.

"Ey; or whulk o' them had mucklest in't," added she. "A hen rins aye to the heap, an' sae dis a fool til a fat lee. Aw can tell ye, lad, for a secret,—but ye maunna be telling it again,—there's some deeds o' darkness gawn on no very far frae this.

Heard ye nae tell of a herd stealing a fat haggis nane o' thae nights?"

"Na."

"Ye'll maybe hear time eneugh. Ye had better keep a hare lug, an' an ee i' the hole o' your neck, as I do. Now, lad, take ye thae news to your bed wi' ye, an' take care an' dinna let them cool. Aw has kend as wee a pultice turn out a brikken plaister afore this."

Davie smelt a rat; and, after many fruitless inquiries, he ventured, on the faith of Grizzy's hints, to spread a report that "it was suspectit the young lord thought as muckle o' the wee lass as the lang ane."—The slander flew abroad like fire, and in a short time came back to Bellsburnfoot with many shameful aggravations, reaching by some means or other the ears of Mrs Bell. That worthy dame, perceiving the unremitted attentions of her son-in-law to Cherry, which were restricted to no bounds, early nor late, began to wish more than ever to have them separated. But as she was not like to have much say in these matters

herself, she applied to her daughter, very unwarrantably; for she measured every body's feelings by her own.

"I sometimes think this has rather been a forced match on your part, Lady M'——. Do you find that your husband has all that kindness and attention that you expected?"

"What a mortifying insinuation, dearest mother! What I have done, I have done; and, as we cannot call back time to re-model our actions, wherefore wound my feelings by such unkind hints? As for the attentions of my husband, they are all and more than I ever expected of man. He suffers me not to have a wish that is not gratified."

"Very well, my dear; that is quite comfortable for a parent to hear. Therefore, let the world say what it will, I shall be contented."

"What a singular perversity of disposition! Why, what has the world to say to that? The world knows nothing of what is done here; nor can you know its opinion if it did."

"It is quite needless to regard what the world says; but there be plenty of tongues reporting, that your accomplished and noble husband is more attached to your cousin than to yourself; and that he devotes those attentions to the maid that should be paid to the married wife. Now, though there is no one pays less regard to the vague opinions of the world than I do, still I think, that, out of deference to its opinion, the sooner that little, languishing, insinuating elf is separated from you and your husband the better."

"Do you consider how unkind and how cruel to me such hints as these are, mother? My husband has reasons for his attentions to Cherry, and those of the most delicate nature. That he has those reasons is to me sufficient, knowing his honourable and affectionate nature. I therefore beg, and entreat, and *pray* of you, that while we remain here I may never again hear an insinuation of any kind against my husband."

Mrs Bell, somewhat alarmed at the vehement manner of her daughter, changed

the subject with the greatest indifference; but she had planted a thorn in her daughter's too susceptible breast, that soon began to take root and fester incessantly. She had suffered much already through dread of the world's opinion; and now to have it supposed that she had forced a match, and that her husband already neglected her for the sake of another; to know that such a report was bandied about the parish, and among their associates, was a mortification that she could not endure, and she began to long with impatience for a removal, or an alteration of circumstances by some mode or other. She sounded her husband several times, but found that in every motion Cherry was included; and, in spite of all her love, and all her efforts, the spirits of the young and comely bride sunk so low, that she became in a manner the leader of the funeral array at the gloomy mansion of Bellsburnfoot.

The attentions both of M'Ion and his mother to Cherry were every day more and more obvious. Mrs Bell perceived it with equally increasing discontent; and, finding

no other safe point of attack, she fixed on her husband, and laid open the circumstances, and the obvious consequences of the case to him with much perspicuity. The thing was all so new to Daniel, that he heard her to the end as with the deepest concern; but the truth was, that when she had done, the atrocity of the offence was but beginning to graze on the surface of his apprehension; and after all her elaborate harangue about the deference due to the opinion of the world, &c., the answer that Daniel made was no more than this:—"Hout, mistress! I dinna think there can be aught wrang atween them."

She then began to declaim against the coarseness of his ideas, and to speak of *sentiments*—and *divided affections*—and *the universal sovereignty of public opinion*;—which when Daniel heard, he rose with uncommon agility—looked out at the window that faced the tup park—put on his hat, with its hinder brim almost in a vertical direction, and went out, whistling "The ewe

bughts, Marion." Daniel was never heard to whistle it so loud in his life.

Mrs Bell, thus baulked in every attempt to get quit of her husband's affectionate niece, laid the plan of a last great manœuvre, which was, to lay the circumstances before Miss Elliot; and then she flattered herself, that, from the disposition she had already shewn to oblige others, she was sure of success. But before a fit opportunity offered, there were some things occurred that puzzled her sapient and calculating head a good deal. M'Ion complained of some serious ailment, although he said not what it was, only that he was not well. He took his meat, his drink, and exercise, much as usual; yet nothing would satisfy him, although he had studied medicine and surgery himself, but sending for one of the first-rate professional gentlemen from Edinburgh to consult with on his case. His mother urged the fulfilment of the proposal without delay. He had prepared his lady not to be alarmed; but honest Daniel and his spouse thought it was an extraordinary business that a doc-

tor should send for another doctor so far, to cure a disease of which nobody could perceive any symptoms. It is true, *his* perceptions were not over acute, but then her discernment! what could equal that?—Alas! there were some there who saw what was totally concealed from them both.

The great doctor from Edinburgh arrived, and had a long consultation with M'Ion; and, pretending in a jocular manner that the latter had now constituted him the family surgeon at Bellsburnfoot, he felt all their pulses, looked at their tongues, and at the pupils of their eyes through a glass. To each of them he prescribed some regimen, or some mode of life; otherwise, he said, he would not be accountable for their lives, far less for their health, for a single day. To Daniel he prescribed that he should drink two-thirds less than his ordinary quantum of whisky-toddy, else there was nothing more likely than that he should be in heaven in a fortnight.

"Lord forbid!" said Daniel. "But I'll tell ye, doctor, it has been my cure, an' my

father's an' grandfather's afore me, for a' diseases, either o' the flesh or the spirit, an' fient ane o' us ever had to send for a doctor frae Edinburgh a' the days o' our lives. There is an auld say ower this country, that 'a Bell never dies but either for drouth or auld age;' an' though I winna swear to the truth o' that, doctor, ye may tak back your prescription for me."

The doctor pronounced him a hopeless patient, and hoped the rest of the family would be more tractable, as it was easier to stop a disease by taking it by the forelock, than by running after it and holding it by the tail. Daniel said, "he believed that was true, as it was exactly the case with a strang toop."—To Mrs Bell the doctor prescribed abstinence from weak diluted diet; to Gatty and her husband travel; to Mrs Johnson more sleep and a little port wine; but although he examined Cherry with more minuteness than any of them, to her he prescribed nothing, observing, that it was out of his power to make her better than she was. He then left the family, all high-

ly delighted with him as a jocular and good-humoured gentleman, and was accompanied part of the way by M'Ion.

From that day forth, the attentions of the young chief to his adopted sister became more exclusive than ever; so also were those of his mother. Cherry was never from his side, and seemed to live and breathe only in the light of his countenance, while his exertions to sooth and keep her in spirits knew no bounds. Mrs Bell became absolutely impatient, conceiving that she saw her daughter drooping through neglect, and determined on telling Cherry her sentiments, and that roundly; but she was anxious that it should be in private, and so constantly were some of them by her side, early and late, that for a good while she could find no opportunity.

It chanced one day that Cherry was pronounced indisposed, and unable to come down to breakfast. M'Ion tasted not a morsel that day, but stalked about the room like a troubled ghost. Mrs Bell actually began a "nursing her wrath to keep it

warm," conceiving that her son-in-law would not have been half so much discomposed if all the Bells of Burnfoot had been unable to come down to breakfast; and she longed not only to have a little dispassionate talk with Miss Elliot on the subject, but with M'Ion himself, should the other not avail. Accordingly, as soon as she had finished her breakfast, she went to Cherry's room, and desiring Mrs Johnson to go to her breakfast, said she would remain with her dear niece until her return.

They were no sooner alone than Mrs Bell began thus:—"I have often regretted, my dear Miss Elliot, that my husband's and son-in-law's officiousness detained you here against your inclination; for I perceive that there is something in the climate, or the society, that does not agree with your spirits and constitution."

"Dear aunt, I entreat that you will entertain no anxiety about me. I declare I never was in better spirits. Do not you see that my spirits are all buoyancy?"

"Never tell me, niece. It is evident to

any one who will suffer herself to see things as they are, that it would have added greatly to your happiness to have been removed from this place—as well as to the happiness of others."

"Well, dear aunt, I believe you are right. I thought so at first, and now I think so again, since you say it. But you know I am but a young ignorant creature, and only know what is right by being told it. I was made to believe that my remaining here would add to the happiness of others, for with that my own was so interwoven that I had no other; but if it has proved the reverse, then have I done far amiss, and I shall be very miserable for having done it during the short, short interval that I shall now remain with you."

"Nay, sweet Cherry, never think of hastening your departure a day on account of my information, which has no other aim but your peace and honour. But I cannot help seeing, nor can I prevent the world from seeing and blabbing it again—nor can I prevent my daughter from seeing that the

attentions of her husband, which a young wife expects should be her own, are all lavished on you. I assure you it has caused a great sensation in this family, and all over the country; and your own good sense, and genuine honourable disposition, will at once point out to you the only path that it is prudent in you to pursue."

"Say no more, dear aunt, I pray you say no more; you have said quite sufficient for me, and perhaps rather too much already. One thing only I crave to know—Does my cousin wish me away?"

"Why, child, she would be loath to say so, and sorry to consent to it. But must I say the truth?—Every one may judge of her feelings by considering what her own would be in such a case."

"Thank you, kind aunt, it is enough—it is enough. And so my dear cousin wishes me away? Well, I have suffered something for her; but such things, I suppose, are expected from poor relations. Ah! but my Catty would not wish her Cherry away, if she but *knew* what I have suffered for her

happiness. But she will know—she will know before she die yet.—Well, dear aunt, you may give my kind love to my cousin, and tell her that I am very soon going to leave her now. I thought to have remained with her and her husband, and with you, dear aunt, and my kind indulgent uncle, for a little while—a week or two, perhaps, or a few days at the least; but now I shall take my leave of you very soon indeed, and may God forgive you all, as I hope to be forgiven at the last; and may you all be happy with one another, when my insignificant and presuming face appears no more among you!—I hear Mrs Johnson coming. Adieu, dear aunt, you have gained your point; but give me your hand, and embrace me before you go away."

Mrs Bell gave her her hand, saying, "That I will, my prudent and sensible little girl;" and then stooping down she saluted her cheek. But Cherry easily perceived that it was not only a cold formal embrace, but a compelled one; and then the excellent dame went out of the room sailing in state-

ly majesty, at one time carrying her head very high, and at another glancing at her feet with great complacency, having, as she deemed, accomplished a master-stroke of policy. When she joined the rest of the family in the breakfasting room, the satisfaction that beamed from her benign countenance was apparent to them all; and as soon as M'Ion withdrew, she could not contain the relation of her success longer. From her husband she expected a bold countercheck, and was not mistaken; but expecting a thankful acquiescence from her daughter, she found she had overshot the mark, and that Gatty was very much hurt at her mother's interference. Then the good dame went on with arguments in justification of what she had done, till she sent Daniel out to the fields with his hands in his vest pockets, and her daughter up stairs in tears.

When Mrs Johnson entered Cherry's room, she turned her face to the wall, and the nurse thinking she wanted repose, fell a reading on the Bible, and continued without speaking for the space of an hour; but

hearing her from time to time fetching deep sighs, she at length inquired how she did, and if she felt herself any worse?

"O no, I am a great deal better," said she. "But I have been thinking about preparing for my journey."

"It will, indeed, be a romantic and delightful journey," said Mrs Johnson, "by the braes of Athol, the glens of Lorn, and the wild Hebrides."

"It is not that journey I mean," said Cherry, "but the journey to my father's house."

Mrs Johnson gazed for a moment in silence, and felt as if an arrow of ice had pierced her heart. "Will you sit up and take a little of this cordial that your own doctor has composed for you, my dear?' said she. "You have been asleep, and your senses seem to be wavering."

"Not at all," returned she. "I have all my senses at my command. But it is true, if it were any matter, that I am proscribed from that delightful Highland journey. My aunt wants to send me off without delay to

my mother's house; but I say she is wrong, it is my father's house that she is sending me to."

"Take a little of this cordial, my dear Cherry. Your voice is altered; it is vapours that affect you."

"I tell you not at all," said she, turning round her face, and smiling languidly. "Do you not see that I am perfectly collected? You think I am dreaming, and that nobody is sending me away? Well, let that rest. Perhaps so I was. But do you not think, on the whole, there is a good deal of ingratitude in this world?"

"Too much, without doubt."

"It is a pity, too, for it is a beautiful world, and a great deal of goodness in it. What time of the day is it?"

"It is, I suppose, about noon. Do you wish to rise?"

"Yes, when the sun is in the middle of the arch of heaven, I want to have one look at the sky, and another at this goodly world. It seems a bright day, and yet a tempestuous wind; it is a day of all others

that I like to contemplate.—I'll not have that frock to-day, bring me the one I wore on the seventh of July—the white one trimmed with pink—I'll wear it to-day, for the sake of something that passed between another and me that day—and I'll have my hair trimmed and shaded in the same manner, too; for this day is the winding up of the trivial scene that was that day begun."

"Let me do all these little things for you, dearest Cherry, for your hand is trembling, and you are in unwonted agitation to-day. Now, shall I sit with you a while at the window?"

"If you please. What a bright, and yet what a tempestuous day! It is, indeed, an auspicious day for setting out on a journey! How easily a bird might scale these storeys of the heavens on such a day, taking the direction of yon bright marbled cloud, that slumbers in perfect stillness above the flying ones! Ah, my dear friend, do but look how these little dark specks are chasing one another up that steep hill—with what amazing swiftness they are speeding on their

course! Will an unbodied soul climb the steeps of the firmament with as much ease and velocity, think you, as these little flying shadows?"

"With as much ease, and with ten times more speed, will a happy spirit wing its way to the abodes of bliss."

"What is a soul, Mrs Johnson? or how does it journey? Has it wings of air, or of down? or does it swim the air as a fish does the sea?—I cannot tell what a soul is."

"Nor can any one, my dearest girl; and if I could define it, your mind is not in a capacity to listen; for I perceive it is roaming wild as the tempest, and frilling with impatience over some ideal separation."

"Tell me this of the soul—Can it go and come at pleasure? watch over a beloved object and walk with him? sit by his side—hear his sighs—see his looks—listen to his words, and perhaps lie in his bosom?"

"I often fondly believe all these."

"So do I! so do I! I believe them too, and will believe them—wherefore should I not? Come, shall we go?"

"Whither, my dear? whither are you going? You cannot go abroad to day; indeed, believe me, you cannot. Let me put you to bed; for though I never saw you look so lovely, your countenance has undergone a strange alteration. I say, listen to me; you cannot go abroad to-day."

"Ah! I had forgot! I have to change my raiment before I go. Come, let us set about it; come, come."

Mrs Johnson rung the bell violently, and ordering the servant to tell her son to come to her, she took hold of Cherry, and half-carrying, half-leading her, placed her on a couch; for her looks and motions had become so wild and irregular, she knew not what she meditated, and therefore she sat down with her arms around her. M'Ion had gone out, but Gatty attended, the tears scarcely dry on her cheek that she had shed on account of what her mother had said to Cherry and herself; for the insinuation fell on her with a double pang. When she came in, Cherry held out her hand, and addressed her in a faint tremulous voice.

"Ah! are you indeed come to see me, and take farewell of me before I set out?"

Gatty gave her her hand in amazement, without speaking. "It is very kind of you, but it was not so to wish your poor cousin away, was it?"

"It shall be the last wish of my heart but one, Cherry, to part with you."

"Is that true? then I have been deceived. But what a weight that word has taken from my heart, which can bear any thing but unkindness. I wish this assurance may not make me defer my journey yet. But I hope not—I hope not. Cousin, I am strangely given to speaking to-day, and Mrs Johnson will have it that I am raving, though I can scarcely give her credit for it. But do you remember of a dream that I once told you?"

"Perfectly well—every circumstance of it. It has never for one day been absent from my memory."

"Well, that is amazing; it has never once been in my head from that day to this. But I witnessed some scenes in the heavens

and the earth to-day, that were all in my dream; and every part of it recurred to my memory as fresh as at the moment I saw it. Well, there are strange things in this world, and communications that I cannot comprehend—I wish I could! But do you not see, cousin, how that dream is wearing to its fulfilment?"

"I hope it will never wear to its final fulfilment. But in some respects it may be said to have done so already. Of all things I have ever known, that dream has appeared to me the most remarkable."

"It is so—it is so. When I think of it it is wonderful. But you do not know it all. The very hills, and clouds, and shadows.—I have nothing to rest my head on here—That day and this are the same—And now I feel I am going to dream it over again."

She articulated these broken sentences in a voice so feeble, that at the last it became inaudible, and died away; and leaning back on the couch, with her head on Mrs Johnson's arms, she fell into a slumber so soft

and so still, that it almost appeared like the sleep of death. The head was thrown back, with the face turned towards Mrs Johnson's cheek, and yet the breathing was so soft she could not feel it. Neither of the two attendants were in any alarm. They had remarked that her spirits had been in a tumult, and had hopes that this calm sleep would restore them to their wonted sweetness of motion.

It was during this period of calm relaxation that M'Ion entered. He had been ruminating in the garden, when the servant came hastily and delivered his mother's message; and knowing that she was in attendance in Cherry's room, he went straight thither. The alarm that he testified on viewing the condition of the sweet slumberer, appeared to them both matter of surprise. To his lady, in particular, it seemed unaccountably mistimed; and she could not help smiling at his perturbation. He held a downy feather to her lips—her breath moved its fibres, but could not heave it from its place. He felt her pulse long and gen-

tly, keeping a stedfast eye on her face, and ever and anon his heart throbbed as it would have mounted from its place.

"What do you mean, Diarmid?" whispered Gatty, in some alarm; "It is nothing but a sleep, and as peaceful a one as I ever beheld."

"Yes, my love, I know it is a sleep; but I pray you, retire, and do it softly, for there is more depends upon her awakening out of such a sleep, than you are aware of."

"If there is any danger whatever, I will wait with my cousin and you. Why should I leave her?"

He then took his mother's place with great caution, desiring her to go with all expedition, and compound some cordial that he named; he also motioned to Gatty to go with her, but she lingered beside him, curious to see the issue of that slumber that so much discomposed her husband. He had his left arm under the pale slumberer's head, and with his right hand he held her arm, apparently counting, with the utmost anxiety, every movement of her pulse, and having

his eye still fixed on her mild relaxed features. Gatty sat down at a distance, folded her arms, and watched in silence. Mrs Johnson came into the room on tiptoe with the cordial; but M'Ion saw neither, his eager eyes were fixed on one object alone. While in that interesting attitude, one of those which a painter would choose, Cherry at once opened her serene blue eyes, and fixed them with a steady but hesitating gaze on the face of him she loved above all the world. She awaked, as it were, mechanically, without so much as a sigh, in the same way that a flame or spark, which seems quite extinct, will all at once glimmer up with a radiance so bright, as to astonish the beholders. His face was all sadness and despair, but hers instantly beamed with a smile of joy. "Am I here already?" said she. "What a blessed and happy state this is, and how easily I have attained it!"

With that she started—looked at her clothes—at his—at all their faces with a hasty glance, and then added, "Already! No, I should have said, am I here *yet?* It

is well, though—it is well. Ah! how fortunate it is, for if I had gone away without this interview, I should have been compelled to return." Then stretching out her hand, on one of the fingers of which there was a ruby ring, that he had put on that day he pledged her his troth—she pointed to it, and said, "See, do you know this?" He could not answer her, for his bosom was bursting with anguish. "And these simple robes—do you know these?—Why, you cannot answer me; but I know you do. Now, do you remember on that day that I returned you your faith and troth, and released you from your rash pledge of honour, that I said, I should never ask another kiss of you *but one?* I crave it now."

"This is more than human heart can support," exclaimed he; and taking her on his bosom, he impressed a long and burning kiss on her lips, as they coloured with a momentary hue of the beryl, in the soul's last embrace with the heart.

"Now, with that kind kiss, have you loosed my bonds with mortality—Do you love me still?"

"The Almighty knows how I love you, dear, dear, and dying sufferer!" cried he, through an agony of sobs and tears.

"Then my last feeling of mortal life is the sweetest," said she; and laying her head on his bosom, she breathed a few low inarticulate sounds as of prayer, and again sunk asleep to awaken no more.

"What does all this mean?" cried Gatty, starting to her feet, and holding up her hands in amazement. "Diarmid! Husband! I say, tell me the meaning of this?"

"Be composed, my love! Be composed! The meaning is but too obvious. There fled the sweetest soul that ever held intercourse with humanity."

"Fled! How fled? She only slumbers, husband. She will awake. She will awake. Tell me, Diarmid—tell me, Mrs Johnson, will not my cousin awake?"

"Yes, my dear child, she will awake," said Mrs Johnson, leading Gatty to a seat, and soothing her. M'Ion scarcely heeded them; but he answered the question involuntarily, still holding the body in his arms.

" Yes, she will awake, but not till the great day of retribution, when I shall stand accountable for her early doom.—Yes, dear departed maid! I have indeed been thy destroyer.—We are all guilty! We are all guilty—art and part in thy death; but none of us knew the delicacy of the flower with which we were toying, till it was too late. My kind—my innocent—my guiltless Cherubina! My earthly happiness shall be buried in thy early grave."

The violence of his grief was here checked by his lady kneeling at his knee, supported by Mrs Johnson, who was alarmed lest she should fall into fits, for her grief was extravagant, and overstepped her husband's, as the flame does the burning pile. " Is my cousin gone?" cried she, in shrieks of despair. " Has the companion of my youth departed without bestowing one kiss, or one benediction on her Gatty? But I have murdered her! I am accused as one of her murderers! And now, would to God that we were both laid in one grave on the same day!"

It was altogether a scene of deep dismay. M'Ion's grief was the most impressive. Gatty's was extravagance itself. Mrs Johnson's was profound, but swayed by reason and experience. Mrs Bell, perhaps, for once in her life, acknowledged to her own heart that she had behaved improperly that morning; but she went about her household affairs, and ordered every thing about the body with the most perfect serenity. Indeed, the servants remarked that they never saw her walk so upright, nor carry her head so high before.

But of all their griefs, there was none more sincere than that of honest Daniel, although, it must be confessed, it had something in it bordering on the ludicrous. He was walking in the tup-park, when he saw Grizzy coming running toward him, always waving her hand as a signal for him to come, but so sore out of breath that she could not call. Daniel never regarded her, but kept on his step and whistled his air, smiling to himself at seeing how fat Grizzy was

puffing. "Ye maun come awa in, sir, directly. Ye're wantit i' the house."

"Ay; ye may tell them that I'll be there presently."

"Naw, but ye maun come directly, sir. Ye maunna gang whistling your tune there."

"What's a' the hurry, ye jaud? What's asteer now?"

"Od, sir, there's naething good asteer. It's Miss Elliot, aw fancy, that's the steer. She has coupit the bucket, it seems; an's dead vera hastily."

"Dead? The woman's mad! That's impossible."

"Naw, it's nae siccan a thing, sir. Come ye an' see. There's an awsome day yonder, skirlin an' yowlin, an' rinnin but an' ben for winding-sheets."

"Lord help me! Is the dear lassie really dead? Then they may a' do as they like for me. Oh dear! oh dear! I wish we have nae brought a bit favourite lamb frae its minny just to be it's death."

Daniel took off his hat with the one hand,

hung his head all on one side, and scratched it with the other; and Grizzy, seeing the intensity of his grief, left him, with an injunction to "come away." He obeyed; but his step, that but a minute before had the firmness of health, and the spring of independence, was now changed to a creeping, broken-down pace, as if every nerve had lost its elasticity. He entered the chamber of death with his hat in his hand; his frame quite palsied; his red jolly face all over freckled as with the measles; his nose the colour of blood, and his mouth wide open. Gatty kneeled at the bed-side and wept; M'Ion was endeavouring to take her away and speak comfort to her, but he himself had the most need of comfort; the two elder females were busied about the lovely corpse, which they had not yet begun to undress, so that Daniel was close at the bed-side ere any one perceived him. "Ah! this is a heart-breaking dispensation, Mr Bell," said Mrs Johnson.

"God pity us! What's to be done?" said

Daniel; "Is she no like to come round again?"

"The vital spark is extinct," said Mrs Johnson.

"Oh! I hope no! I hope no!" cried Daniel, in a bass voice of true pathos. "See, the bit canny face is just as bonny as ever. Keep your hands off her; or tak good tent an' dinna hurt her; for I hope in the Lord she'll come about again. Mistress, tak ye care, for ye hae the heart of a dummont, an' had a' your life. I tell ye a' it's impossible she can be dead.—See, nurse; I gar mysel' trow I see a smile forming on her face even now."

"Your fond hope makes you believe so, sir. But it is too certain that it is all over with her. There is no more re-animation for this body below the sun."

"Weel, but deal gently wi' her. Ye dinna ken. Him that made her at first, an' made her sae good, can bring her round yet if he sees meet. An she be really gane, ye may do a' as ye like for me! Had the poor bit lamb died at its mither's side, I

could hae borne the loss. But for us to pu' it into an unco pasture, an' haud a' its bits o' yearnings and longings at nought, is what I'll ne'er win aboon as lang as I'm a man. Oh, wae's me! wae's me! The like o' you disna ken. But it's sae natural for a motherless lamb to tak up wi' ony creature that's kind to it, that it gaes to my heart to think how she has been guidit! An' I wish *her* dear heart hasna been broken at the last."

As he said these last words, he cast an indignant and reproving look at his better half; who, fearing the turn that his lament was like to take, deemed it high time to interpose. "Mr Bell, have you no sense of propriety or decorum?" said she. "Why will you stand palavering there, and deterring us from laying out the body? I assure you it is more than time that it were done already. I therefore beseech the gentlemen to withdraw."

M'Ion departed, taking his lady with him; but Daniel still lingered, looking wistfully at the bed. Mrs Johnson sym-

pathizing with him, uncovered the face of the deceased once more. Daniel stooped down and looked at it earnestly; and, perceiving that all earthly hope was lost, the big tears began to drop amain. He then kissed the pale lips and both the cheeks; and as he turned away, he wiped his eyes hard with the sleeve of his coat, and said these impressive words, "Fareweel, dear lamb! We'll maybe never meet again."

The funeral, by M'Ion's desire, was conducted with great pomp and splendour, as became that of the sister of a Highland Chief; and it was not till after the performance of that last duty, that he informed his friends how he had seen that catastrophe approaching from the third or fourth day after their arrival at Bellsburnfoot: That she was then seized with a hectic fever, which brought on a rapid consumption, of a nature that no anodyne could counteract: That he had pretended illness himself, in order to have the advice of the first medical person of the nation; for her disease was of that complexion that the least serious alarm, or agitation

of spirits, had a tendency to prove fatal: And that he was not thoroughly satisfied in his own mind, that something of that nature had not occurred, hastening her latter end. Daniel looked at his dame, Gatty at her mother; but an expressive shake of her head kept both silent, which was a great mercy for their broken-hearted kinsman's peace of mind.

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CIRCLE VII.

A GLOOMY despondency now brooded over the family at Bellsburnfoot, and no prospect appeared that the cloud was soon going to disperse. Daniel sauntered about from morning till night, but he never once looked into the tup-park. He would not so much as look out at the window that faced the enclosure, nor whistle a tune above his breath; but as he jogged along, his breath was for the most part inadvertently modulated into one or other of his favourite old pastoral airs. M'Ion's attention, now that he had no other care to divide it, at least no care that attention could alleviate, was wholly devoted to his lady. There was no endearment that man could bestow, of which this affectionate young Chief fell

short; and there was none so much delighted with this as Mrs Bell, who seemed to feel the loss of Cherry as one feels an enlargement in their capacity, or sphere of motion; and dear as her release from a certain check on her grandeur and felicity was bought, she really seemed to enjoy it for a time.

Alas! how insufficient are all human efforts in the attainment of felicity, if these be not founded on virtue and goodness! Providence so willed it, that this cold-hearted woman's triumph should be but of short and clouded duration. Her daughter was, indeed, soothed by her husband's delicate attentions, but still, on her part, there seemed something wanting. She was never delighted. She would at one time fix on her husband a look of the most indescribable fondness and affection, but in a very short time she never failed to take her eyes away, as if her mind were irresistibly drawn to something else; while every abstracted look that settled on M'Ion's face, told expressly what the feelings were within, "that

he was born to be unhappy, and to render others so."

The reader is now sufficiently acquainted with the characters of this family group, to conceive, in some degree, the different sensations of the two parents, when M'Ion one morning informed them, in a flood of tears, that his adored lady was in a most perilous state of health,—that he accounted it undutiful in him to withhold the secret longer from their knowledge, but that she was fast following her cousin to the grave, if the goodness of her constitution did not facilitate some extraordinary and immediate change.

If there is a pang beyond all redress, it is the assurance that a beloved object is about to be taken from us, which no human aid can save or restore. Once the blow is struck, hope springs away with the parting breath to another state of existence, indulging in dreams of future communion till sorrow often expands to a twilight of joy,—but here the sorrow is inexpressible. Daniel received the information in profound silence,—it

seemed a long time ere his mind could measure the extent of the calamity,—it could only take it in by small degrees at a time, but these still expanded as it advanced, until at last he came in idea to a new-made grave, and himself at the head of it! and all beyond that appearing to Daniel an unexplored blank, he lifted up his eyes as if to look what could be seen farther away. That was the first motion he made after his son-in-law communicated to him the woful intelligence; and it being the genuine emotion of a feeling heart, there was a sublimity in it. He was about to speak, but was interrupted by his experienced and infallible dame.

"I am highly amused at your rueful looks, Mr M'Ion," said she, "and at the melancholy tone in which you have made us acquainted with this profound secret. How little you know about new-married ladies of her age! I assure you I should not be much satisfied to see my daughter look otherwise than she does."

"Ooh?" cried Daniel, fixing his bent

eyes on his son-in-law for an answer. "Ooh? Lord send her bodings to be true! What do ye say to that, sir? The mistress is gayan auld farrant about women focks?"

M'Ion shook his head. Daniel leaned his down on his open hand, and, with a deep groan, said, "Oh dear me! I'm feared I'll never can stand this storm! When ane comes on early i' the winter of life, it may be borne; but when they fa' late i' the year, after the Candlesmas o' ane's age, they're unco ill to bide. I find my fleece o' warldly hope is growing unco thin now,—the win' an' the drift blaw cauld round my peeled head, an' the snaw's already heart-deep around me."

M'Ion was affected. Mrs Bell again began to treat the thing with levity, but her son-in-law checked her by assuring her, that, to his sorrow, he was too well assured of the imminence of his dear lady's danger, and no stranger to the nature of her disease; and he recommended, above all things, that the family should join their efforts to prevent her from falling into lowness of spirits;

and never once in her presence to drop a hint of her danger, or the illness by which she was affected.

Their caution proved of no avail, for Gatty was quite aware of her danger herself; but the family were playing at cross-purposes: Gatty was endeavouring to keep her illness a secret from her husband and parents, for fear of giving them distress, and they were keeping it from her, lest its effect on her spirits might prove fatal. But with Mrs Johnson she passed no leisure hour without conversing about her approaching end; and it was then that the character of that estimable young lady began to be fully developed. From the time that she felt her heart shackled in the bonds of love, her character may have appeared capricious; for it did so to herself. But when once she perceived, or deemed she perceived, her dissolution advancing on her apace, she gave up, without repining, all the vanities of this life; all her hopes of rank, honours, and estimations, as well as conjugal love, the dearest of all. Few ever attained a summit more estima-

ted; but it had been gained by means that left a corroding wound behind, and soon apprized her that the anticipated felicity was not to be long enjoyed. Her cousin's death had made a deep impression on her mind, but it had also left her a lesson of resignation which she determined on copying, without vain complaints, and without repining. The only thing that dwelt with a continual weight on her mind, was the spiritual welfare of the friends she was going to leave behind; but with all her art, she could not, for a long while, draw away any of them into religious discussion, save Mrs Johnson. Her husband waived it as a study detrimental to her spirits. Her mother approved of religion, and attended its ordinances with all decent ceremony; but went no farther, hers not being the religion of the heart. Daniel believed religion to be an exceedingly good thing, and held it in due reverence; but then he knew very little about it. His father had kept up family worship at Bellsburnfoot as long as he lived, and Daniel had always joined him in sing-

ing the psalm with full swing of voice, and when the old man's eyes began to fail, read the chapter for him; but these had been the extent of honest Daniel's private devotions. And as to the public duties of religion, they had been attended to in the accustomed way: That is to say, he rode down to his parish-church every good day, took his corner-seat in the breast of the gallery, and one leashing quid of tobacco after another,—thought about the breeds of tups, prices of wedders, wool, and crock ewes, till the service was over; and having thus attended to it with all manner of decency, he chatted with his companions all the way home, took his dinner and quantum of whisky toddy; then, after taking a walk in the tup-park before evening, he came in and stretched himself on the sofa, thoroughly convinced in his own mind that *religion was an exceedingly good thing*. He even once went so far as to remark to Mrs Malcolm, that "it was a *grand* thing religion! an'," added he, "what wad we be an we wantit it? Nae better than a wheen heathen savages."

From the hour of his niece's decease Daniel became an altered man, even in his Sunday deportment and exercises. He did not now think of his worldly affairs in the church, or, if he did, he soon checked such thoughts, and tried all that he could to take hold of what the Doctor was saying, though not always with certain effect. And now, the dread that his only daughter and darling child might so soon be snatched from him, and hurled into another state of existence, awakened still farther conviction within him, that some provision was absolutely necessary for futurity,—that he must set about seeing after a *Jacob's ladder*, as he called it ; for he found there was something within him that rebounded from the idea that the cold grave was to be his eternal resting place. The nature of man is such, that he must be reaching at something beyond the present,—he is the being of future hope, and, without that, his happiness is a dwelling founded on the sand, a striking verification of these sublime words,

" The rains descended, and the floods came; and the winds blew, and beat upon that house that it fell, and the ruin thereof was great." Daniel found himself groping his way on a path that ended in a pitfall, and would gladly have gone in search of another that evaded it, could he have got hold of a proper one. He was in this frame of mind when the following conversation took place between his daughter and Mrs Johnson:—

" How does my dear young lady feel this morning?"

" Better and better. I have been taking a review of my past life this morning, and am utterly ashamed of my frivolity; but I have humbled myself, and asked forgiveness. I fall the victim of LOVE; and, alas! I fear that another has likewise fallen the victim of that love of mine, which must therefore be unhallowed. I will never try to cancel it from my heart; but I have been trying to endear it still farther by a tie of a more refined and heavenly nature."

" All thy thoughts, that are truly thine

own, are gentle, amiable, and refined; and blessed is he who is the object of them!" said Mrs Johnson. "O, methinks, what a virtuous and exalted race shall proceed from this union between thee and my son!"

"That is a cruel remark, dearest nurse; the cruellest word you ever said to me! There you have touched the only chord that could yet bind me for a season to the sorrows and sins of mortal life. To have been the mother of a blooming and virtuous offspring,—to have nursed a young Diarmid at my breast, and watched the kindling glance and manly features of the father in those of a lovely and loving baby,—would have been a joy indeed! So I have thought, and so I feel at this moment. Nay, could I have but lived to give birth to such a treasure, to kiss him, and bless him in the name of the Most High, I have thought I could have died happy and contented. But the view is a false one, and seen through the medium of human passion. These would all have been but ties to bind me faster to a state in which I have ceased to treasure

my hopes. You will not believe me, Mrs Johnson, or you would pretend not to do so; but I have but a very few weeks, and probably but a very few days, to live: and now I am resolved, that my whole remaining time shall be spent in the most strenuous endeavours to draw those I love and honour to a sight of their undone state by nature, and to take hold of the only Rock of Redemption that is placed before them, so that we may all meet and be happy together in another world."

Mrs Johnson, finding she could not change the bent and current of her adored daughter-in-law's thoughts, commended them, and had some hopes, that her ardour in such an exercise might give her new motives of action, and a new energy to her frame.

Gatty again assailed her husband privately, but he still waived the subject by acquiescing in all her sentiments; and she found, that when he was disposed to make any remark, he was much more capable of teaching her, than she was of teaching him.

She tried her mother again and again; but she remained severely and immovably the same. But when she came to converse seriously with her father, of whom she had the least hope of all, she found, that he now began to pay deep attention to her words, to utter awkward responses to her pious sayings, and hang on them with a kind of drowsy and confused delight. Her endeavours after her father's conversion then became incessant. She pointed out pieces of Scripture to him, which he read aloud with deep interest and strong feeling, wondering that he had never found them out before; and, in a few days, she had him praying privately with her in her chamber. Daniel had never tried that holy exercise before; and certainly performed it in as awkward a manner as may be; for he had nothing but some old sentences of his father's prayer, half remembered, and some of the Doctor's forenoon ones, which he mixed up in a mess together, in a manner so confused and unmeaning, that it would have made any other person save his daughter lose all hold of

gravity. To her they were words of sweetness and delight, for she viewed them as the first fruits of a new existence; and, partly to please her, he persevered daily in the exercise, until at length he grew strongly interested in it himself, and had constantly some new sentences, picked out of Scripture, or Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs, introduced into his prayer, till by degrees it began to bear some similarity to one. The rest of the family kept purposely away; but the word soon spread among the servants of their master's conversion, at which some of them were much rejoiced, but others viewed the news with contrary sensations,—as witness the following conversation between Davie Shiel and the kitchen-woman:—

"What think ye can be the reason, Grizzy, that our young lady is grown sae ower-the-matter religious?"

"Aw kens noughts about strunts an' mirligoes. What's the reason that the merle sings clearest whan the eggs are chippin'?"

"Ah, Grizzy, Grizzy! I doubt ye hae a deep meaning there."

"Ay; a scart's as gude as a howlet ony day, an' a buck as a braid sow. Commend me to a white saster, and her to the Dundee croon; what sets ane, misgoggles another."

"Na, weel I wat, lassie, that's true ye say; for aince a woman taks a whim, aye the madder she's on't the better. An' it may set *her* weel eneugh to fast an' pray; but the warst thing ever she did in her life, was the making o' our maister religious. I canna pit up wi' that ava. I'm sure it wad just sit as weel on the toop Charlie as on him."

"Aw can tell ye what wad sit better nor ony o' them, an' wad be a better sight too, an' that's a great lade o' meal on an ox's back, an' him gaunchin first at the tae end, an' than at the tither, to try to get out a mouthfu'."

"Hey-gontrins, but ye ir a queer ane!—But I can tell you ae thing; an he dinna look better after his sheep than he's like to do, I'll gang an' leave baith him an' them."

"That wad be a sight worth seeing indeed. Did ye ever see a cat rin awa after a fleein' craw, an' leave a dead bull-trout?"

"No."

"Na, I trow no, lad. The ferly's i' the spleughan, no i' the spence.—Aih, wow me! I wonder whan maidenheads will come as laigh as three halfpence farthing the ounce? or gin they maun still keep up to the price o' the minister's meal?"

"Ye gang aye clean ayont me, Grizzy; I canna sae muckle as keep sight o' ye, ye're sae doons clever. But I wad like to ken what ye think o' this franazy about religion; for I think an you an' I set our faces against it, we'll either pit a stop till't, or swee't aff at a side."

"Aw kens noughts about it; but aw thinks, an the kirk-sessions war awa', it wad be a gayan comfortable maundril religion. But *they're* a sair drawback on't! They just sour like a clotch o' soot i' the side o' ane's parritch bicker. A rough barn-door maks red-headit hens, an' red-headit hens

wad soon turn clockers. That's ma notion o' things."

"Hout, Grizzy, woman! I aux ye a question in ae sense, an' ye answer it in another. It is about our maister that I'm concerned; an' I think you an' I might spean him frae his prayers an' his sawms."

"That wadna be fair, lad. When there's a Jacob's lether wantit to speel to the booner flat, wad ye gar a man fa' by the gate an' brik his neck? It strikes me, that auld Dan is right unlike winning to the storey aboon the ceiling, but it's fair to let him try. If ane climbs to a nest that there are nae eggs in, he has naething for't but to keek in an' come down again."

"Something maun be done, Grizzy, or a' things about this town will gang to confusion. A masters e'e double's the darg; an' ilka ane is nae sae mensefu' as you an' me. We *maun* hae him speaned frae this praying concern, or else he'll mak fools o' us a'."

"Aw thinks, he'll hae nae grit steek wi' some o' us."

"I maun first hear how he comes on, Grizzy, for that's the greatest curiosity I hae in the world; an' if I find he maks a babble o't, as I ken he will, I'll tax him wi't, an' try to open his een to his interest. Now, Grizzy, my dear, ye ken I hae a respect for you——"

"Aih, wow me! what's a' this? I wuss we maunna grow dizzy, an' coup ower wi' this blawin' i' our lug! An the wind an' the rain gang contrair ane anither, the swaird may get a double droukin' in ae night, an' wow but that will be braw! What's to be the upshot o' a' this *dear* an' *spect?*—a puddin' an' a pint o' broo, aw fancy?"

"It is just that ye will tak me to some preevat place, where I can hear a' my maister's religious exercises, an', if possible, see how he 'means himsel."

"What will ye gie me, then?"

"Why, I'll gie you an hour's courtin' i' the hay nook; and then, whatever comes round, we ken baith the best and the warst o't."

"Tell me the warst o't, or I promise."

"The warst o't is marriage, Grizzy, lass! —marriage, ye ken."

"Aih, wow me! but the best maun be a braw thing!—Say nae mair, but think weel; and, harkye, gin ony body miss ye out o' the ha' at e'en, ye may say ye were awa' fishing cods an' lobsters; but daft as Grizzy is, she's no the fool to be catched wi' your bait. Aih, wow me! an the swan should caickle in the gainder's nest, there wad be a dainty tichel o' gezlings!"

Grizzy left the ewe-herd in a trice, capering and casting him a haughty glance, about which Davie was not much cast down, for he knew the kitchen-woman's weak side from long acquaintance. Accordingly, when the rest of the servants were bound to bed, she desired him to "stay, an' gie her shoe a steek;" and, as soon as they two were left by themselves, she conducted him up to a dark closet, that served as a wardrobe for gentlemen's clothes, &c. and which was separated from the chamber where M'Ion and his lady slept only by a thin partition: for be it considered, that Gatty did not now sleep

in her little neat garret-room, but in the best room of the second storey with her husband. In this room there was a fire kept all the day, and it often served the ladies as a drawing-room. It had likewise now become customary for Daniel to accompany his daughter thither every night, to spend some time with her in devotion; and she longed so much for that sweet hour, that she often called him away full early in the evening. There was no door between the dark closet and the large bed-room, but Grizzy had contrived a small aperture behind the edge of the curtain, some years previous to this, for quite a different purpose than listening to prayers. It had been formed, according to some of her malicious neighbour servant-maids' account, for settling assignations with a certain waggish gentleman that once slept there. Be that as it may, into that closet Grizzy introduced the curious shepherd; and, after hanging all round him mantles and great-coats, so that he could not be seen if any body en-

tered, she left him, to attend in the kitchen, lest she should be called.

The family were at supper when Grizzy conducted her lover to his listening-place; and, as she knew they would, Daniel and his daughter retired from table straight to the bed-chamber, leaving the rest in the parlour, where they always remained till his return. Davie had a half view of the table at which the two were to be placed. There were a couple of Bibles on it, a large and a small one; and, as Gatty placed the light on the table, she opened the large Bible, sought out a certain psalm, and laid the book down open before her father's seat. Davie perceived a serenity, as well as an animated glow, on her face, that he wondered at, and thought to himself, "That wench is gone crazed about religion." Old Daniel came next in his sight,—took his seat,—set up his jolly broad face, now a good deal emaciated,—put on his spectacles,—and, turning to the Bible, he tried three or four times whether he saw best through the glasses or over them. Davie,

who sincerely loved his master, judging this droll experiment to proceed from mere awkwardness, and a consciousness that he knew not what to do next, was moved with despite at him, and almost quaked to hear him begin. "Auld gouk!" said Davie to himself, "I wish ye war a hunder miles off! Ye're ower lang o' setting up for a reader an' a prayer. The sheep-fauld an' the ewe-bught wad set ye better; an' though I'm far frae lightlifying religion, yet I think I could hae trustit to your honest heart for heaven, without making a great bayhay about it at the hinder-end."

"Where do you wish that we should sing the night?" said Daniel. Gatty pointed to the 23d verse of the 73d psalm, and desired him first to read and then sing four verses there. He read them slowly and distinctly, and then, looking over the spectacles, he said, "That's very beautiful. I remember of liking weel to hear that read an' sung langsyne."

"Yes, dear father, it is beautiful," returned she. "It is even grand and sublime

beyond conception, particularly to a dying person." Daniel looked her broad in the face; he had not the power or the heart to make any remark, but he read the 24th verse over again aloud, and then the two following in an under voice, shaking his head at every line. He was then proceeding to sing the verses, but she stopped him, and said, "Do you remember all those parts of the psalms which you and I have sung together, father?"

"I canna just say that I do," said Daniel.

"I wish particularly that you should remember them," said she, "and, for that purpose, I have marked them round with red ink, in hopes that you will sometimes sing them again for my sake. I cannot think of being forgotten in my father's house."

"It will be lang afore ye be forgotten, gang when an' where you will, my woman," said Daniel.

"I have had so much delight in these little devotional exercises with you," said

she, " that I desire to go over all these little portions of the psalms once more with my father, while I have a quiet opportunity. There are not many of them."

" An there were a hundred, I'm sure I's no weary," said Daniel.

She then began at the 6th psalm, a part of which was marked, and went on through all the portions they had sung together, making her father always read them over himself, to fix them somewhat in his memory. She did the same with the portions of Scripture, only they did not read them over together, but she shewed him that she had them all marked for his future remembrance. Daniel was very much affected, for he knew what she adverted to, and a great deal more about her case than she imagined; but he was afraid of the subject, and said, by way of putting it off, " But, Gatty, my dear, I thought I saw some parts of the psalms marked with red ink in the same way as the rest, that you passed by, an' that I ken we didna sing thegither."

She smiled in his face and remained si-

lent,—an answer seemed hanging on her tongue, but she lacked the power to give it utterance. Daniel perceived her hesitating mood, and continued waiting for an answer, looking one while over the glasses and another while through them, straight in her face, in the same way that Dr Jamieson waits for an answer to a home question. There is no manner of questioning so hard to withstand as this. One must give a positive answer to it, even though it be by confessing one's ignorance or error. It is irresistible, and so it proved in the present instance. "These are the verses we have yet to sing," said she, "and you might also have remarked that they are all numbered. See, these are all the numbers as they have followed, and are to follow each other; and, look, dear father, this is the last, (and she pointed to the 5th verse of the 31st psalm.) See, there is but one verse marked for singing that night, because, perchance, there may be others here besides you and me."

"I do not understand you—not in the

least," said he; "but I shall endeavour to do all that you bid me."

She again looked in his face; and then, taking his hand in both hers, said, with a smile of the most filial tenderness, "I have a secret to tell you, dearest father, which I should have told you long ago, had it not been out of regard for your present peace and comfort, and I beg that you will receive it with the same calm and christian resignation that I have borne it. You and I have very soon to part."

Daniel's blood ran cold within him. He could not look in her face, but he looked down to the Bible, and, with a deep-drawn sigh, answered her in these words: "We maun part when the Lord will."

"Amen!" said she. "That is spoken like a man and a Christian! And now, father, I warn you that my dissolution is drawing on apace, and all the skill of mortal man cannot protract my existence one hour. I have had frequent warnings of my great change both in my body and spirit, and now it is nigh at hand, even at the

door. My days and hours, like those of all mankind, were numbered ere ever I was born; but now their number has been disclosed to my longing soul."

"Dinna let ony o' thae second-sight visions craze your head, an' shorten your days, my bairn," said Daniel. "The doctors say that these things rise frae what they ca' the nerves, an' shouldna be regardit. Ye ken ye spak to me about dying in Edinburgh; an' I think it isna that fair in you to be sae fond of dying; for I'm sure there are few whose life might be a greater blessing baith to hersel an' ithers. I hope, for my part, that you'll live to see a little noble Heeland grandson o' mine lay auld Daniel Bell's right shoulder in the grave."

"That has not been the will of my Creator, and what he wills must be right," said she. "No offspring of mine must you ever see, father. I must go down to the earth as one who hath never been. I spoke to you of my death in Edinburgh, because from the moment I went there I had a presentiment that the situation in which I found

myself placed was to bring on my death. It has done so; and yet there was a danger that I did not see. The joys and anticipations of life are now over with me. I do not bid you believe me, but only request that you will bear in mind, that your Gatty says *she believes*, that early on the next Sabbath morning, between the first and third crowing of the cock, she shall be lying on that bed a lifeless corse, and her friends weeping around her."

"That's e'en a dismal belief, but it's a thing that I downa believe, nor yet think about," said Daniel. "If the skeel of a' the doctors, an' the prayers of a' the good an' a' the righteous, can stand ye in ony stead"—

She interrupted his passionate declamation by laying her hand on his arm, and saying, "Hold, dear father!—that is, of all other things, the one I desired most to speak to you concerning; and I warn you, that no apothecary's drugs, these great resorts of the faithless and the coward, shall ever come within my lips. They may render my life comfortless by qualms and vapours, but they

cannot add to my existence one hour or one moment. That is in the hand of the Almighty; and to his awards I bow with humble submission, without repining, and without a murmur. Nay, believe me, father, I will take my last look of this world of anxiety, sin, and suffering, with a joy that I have no words to describe; and with a hope of future communion that is likewise inexpressible as far as regards myself, but is marred by some fears on account of those I love, for without their fellowship my joy would be incomplete. So thinks and so feels poor human nature. But be that as it may, none of your self-sufficient doctors, with their hums and their haws, their shakes of the head, wise prescriptions, and Latin labels, for me. All will-o'-wisps to engender false hopes, lead the poor benighted soul astray, and leave it on the quaking, sinking fen. Neither will I have any thing to do with the exhortations of your formal divines, who come on a forced journey sorely against the will of man and horse, and repeat to me that which they have said to

every person in the same circumstances since they took up the trade, and pray for me what they have prayed for thousands. To my own lips, and to those of my husband and parents, shall all my petitions to the throne of grace be confined. I would rather kneel with you, and join in a petition from the heart, however simple the expression, than in the most sublime effusion of the learned pedagogue, who addresses Heaven in words of precious length and sonorous cadence, to set off his own qualifications."

"Ye war aye inclined to rin to extremes in every thing a' your days, my bairn," said Daniel. "Your spirit has often brought me in mind of a razor that's ower thin ground, an' ower keen set, whilk, instead of being usefu' an' serviceable, thraws in the edge, or is shattered away til a saw, an' maun either be thrown aside as useless, or ground up anew. Now, my dear bairn, an this thin an' sensitive edge war ground off ye awee on the rough hard whinstone of affliction, I think ye will live to be a blessing to a' concerned wi' ye."

"I never heard ought said mair pat to the purpose sin' I was born!" said Davie to himself.

"In your prayers for me to-night, and the few nights we have to be together, father," said Gatty, "I entreat that you will not intercede with the Almighty to lengthen out my days. That is a matter decided and acquiesced in,—a register sealed, no more to be opened."

"I maun hae my ain way, or else I canna pray a word," said Daniel. "My petitions canna be confined to ae subject, nor twae, nor three, nor maybe half a dozen; for what comes boonmost maun be out, or there I stick, lookin o'er my shoulder like Lot's wife, an' never win farther. But that's ae thing ye may be sure o', whatever I ask for on your account will aye be frae the heart."

"That I know well, dear father," returned she, "and that makes your homely prayers to me so sweet."

The two now proceeded to their devotions. They sung together the four verses

'prescribed so sweetly, could not help joining e his breath. Daniel read out to him in the Gospel w ple seriousness, that the dre bungling divine exercise by d from Davie's heart, and he join in the sacred service. T daughter kneeled together, a the occasion seem, and so abs all earthly hopes, that the hind ccalment, who came to pick out haps to laugh, could not abstain fr ing along with them; and it is o his report that the following notes niel's prayer for that evening were taken.

"O Lord, it's but unco seldom that I come hurklin afore you, to fash ye wi' ony poor petitions o' mine; for I hae been aye o'er upliftit an' massy about ought that ye gae me to complain; an' whan ye were pleased to tak ought frae me, I held my tongue. I hae aye countit mysel clean unwordy o' being heard, or ony way tentit by sic a good being as thou art, an' therefore

ne yammerin an' whinin
o' the day, for this thing
ing. Ye ken weel your-
o' nae disrespect, but I
nco selfish like to be higgle-
lifetime for favours to a poor
frae ane wha kend a' my
l, an' whom I never yet dis-
now, indeed, my good Lord
he time is comed that I maun
with ye a wee, an' ye're no to
There are some things that the
man can neither thole, nor his head
end, an' then he's obliged to come
. Now, I'm no gaun to prig an' aglebergan wi' ye as ye war a Yorkshire-man, but just let ye hear the plain request, an' the humble judgment of a poor auld sinfu' man.

"Ye hae gi'en me wealth, an' just as muckle wit as to guide it, an' nae mair. Ye hae gi'en me a wife that's just sic an' sae, but, on the hale, about up wi' the average stock price that's gaun i' the country. Ye hae gi'en me twa sons of whom I hae nae

reason to complain, but mony reasons to thank ye for. But ye gae me a daughter that has aye been the darling o' my heart, the very being of a' others for whom I wished to live, an' on whom I wished to confer favours. My heart was gratefu' to you for the gift; an' if I haena expressed my thankfu'ness as I should hae done, it was a heavy crime, but I canna help it. An' now thou's threatenin to take this precious gift frae me again, in the very May-flower o' life, an' the bud o' yirthly hope an' beauty. Is this like the doing of a father an' a friend? An I were to gie my son Joseph a bonny ewe-lamb, the flower o' the flock, an' gin he were to accept o' the gift, an' be thankfu' for it,—how wad it look in me afterwards, when the pretty thing was just come to its prime, if I war to gang yont the hill an' hund the dogs on it till they pu'd the life out o't, an' then take the bouk to mysel'? What wad my son Joseph say to that? I think he wad hae reason to complain, an' I wad be laith to do it. The case is thoroughly my ain.—An' now, O my gracious

an' kind Father, dinna tak my bit favourite lamb frae me sae soon. Dinna hund the dogs o' disease an' death on my darling, to pu' her precious life away ere ever the silver cord be loosed, or the wheel broken in the cistern,—ere the bleat of the murt has been heard in the ha', or the clank o' the shears ower the head o' the shearling. What's to come o' us a', an' especially what's to come o' auld Daniel Bell, an thou take away this dear, this beloved thing, that is kneeling before thee here at my side? It's as muckle as a' our reasons an' a' our lives are worth, an' my weak sight can see nae fatherly hand in sic an act. If thou canna stock heaven wi' bright an' beauteous spirits otherwise than at the expense o' breaking parents' hearts, it strikes me that thou hast a dear pennyworth. But I am an ignorant an' blindfauldit creature, an' canna faddom the least o' thy divine decrees, an' I pray for forgiveness.—I ken thou wilt do a' for the best at the lang run, but the feelings that thou hast given deserve some commiseration for the present. I

therefore beg an' implore of thee, for the sake of him who died for the children of men, that thou wilt spare my child. Spare an' recover her, O Lord, that she may live to shew forth thy praise in the land of the living; an' if thou wants a prop for ony o' the sheds in the suburbs o' Heaven, I ken whae will stand thee in as good stead, an' whae winna grudge yielding up his life for hers, but will willingly lay down his gray hairs in the grave in the place o' thae bonny gouden locks. I hae nae heart ava to live without her, an' if, in despite of a' I can say, thou art still pleased to take her to thysel', my neist request shall be, that thou take us a' off thegither, tag-rag an' bob-tail. If I be sinning in this request, it is because I ken nae better, an' I implore forgiveness; but it is a father's earnest an' heart-bleeding petition, that thou wilt spare the life of his dear child, an' restore her once more to the light of life, health, an' joy.

"These are my preevat requests, the sentiments o' my ain heart, an' it's the first time

I had ever the face to express them afore ye in my hamely mother tongue; but mine's a case o' great dread an' anxiety, an' admits o' nae standin on stappin-stanes.—There's nought for it but plashin through thick an' thin. If thou hast indeed revealed to her spirit the secret of her dissolution, I winna insist on ye brikking your word; for I ken ye're neither like a Yorkshire woo'-man, nor a Galloway drover, to be saying ae thing the day an' another the morn. But I wad fain hope it is only a warning gi'en in kindness to lead to repentance, an' that ye intend makin a Nineveh job o't after a'. In the faith o' this, an' of thy infinite mercy, I again implore of thee to grant me my darling's life, if at all consistent with thy holy an' just decrees.—An' this brings me to the second part of my unworthy discourse.—These are a father's sentiments, which he was debarred from uttering, but could not contain in his breast while on his knees before thee. We must now, at no more than five days after date, draw on thy bounty, con-

junctly an' severally, for value received, although we must confess the ransom to have been paid by another, not by us.

"O Lord, look down in mercy an' compassion upon us two poor mortal and dying creatures here kneeling before thee on the earth, the crumb-claith below thy throne,—an' for the sake o' the best day's-man that ever took a job by the piece since the creation o' the world, an' executed the sairest an' the hardest darg, grant us a remission of our manifold sins. Into these mysteries o' man's salvation I darena, for my part, sae muckle as peep through the borrel hole o' modern devices; but we hae baith sic a perfect an' thorough dependence on thy fatherly love an' kindness, that we can never dread, nor think, nor dream of aught harsh or severe coming frae the beneficent hand that made us,—that has fed an' preserved us sae lang, an' made us a' sae happy wi' ane anither. Wae be to the captious tongue that wad represent thee as standing on flaws an' punctilios with the creatures of thy hand, even to the nineteenth part of a

strae's balance, when it is evident to a' nature, that since the day thou created them, thou never had'st a thought in thy head that hadna the improvement of the breed, baith in virtue an' happiness, in view! Our sins, nae doubt, are many in their number, an' heinous in their nature; an' gin a' tales be true, they may be greater an' mair numerous than we ken ought about. But in this is our faith founded, that they bear nae mair proportion to thy mercy in an' through a Redeemer, than the sand by that burnside does to the everlasting mountains. If that pickle sand were sawn ower but the thousandth part o' the hills that surround it, it wad never be ken'd nor discovered to be there; an' nae mair wad our bits of back-fa'ings an' shortcomings in duty, be discovered, if thrown into the boundless ocean o' redeeming love. There will we set up our rest in the day of great adversity, an' there will we place our Jacob's ladder that shall bear our steps to a better country.

"But concerning this young person now bowing at thy foot-stool, what shall we say,

or how shall we express our feelings? She is, indeed, resigned to her latter end, an' rejoices in the hope set before her. Alas! it isna sae wi' me! I hae a hankering for her life that I canna get aboon, an' wad fain hope that ye'll no just render a father's agony an' utter desolation complete. But if thou hast otherwise determined, Lord help me to submit to the blow, for I find I can never do it of myself. She has been a dear bairn to me; she has sat on my knee; she has lain in my bosom, an' slept with her arms around my neck; an', as far as I remember, has never gi'en me a sair heart sin the day that thou gae her to me. But if I maun resign her, I maun resign her; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Make her meet an' fit for that great an' awfu' change that sooner or later is awaiting her, which I darena mention, because I dinna comprehend it. Ane wad hae thought that happiness was piled up for her, in this life, without end, an' without calculation; but within this wee while, I hae been made to tremble, lest a' our fine fabric may hae

been sapped in its foundation, an' is shaking to its fall. O! I fear me, I fear me, the cop-stane o' that fabric was foully laid, an' thou hast visited it heavily on our heads, an' art about to visit it more heavily still, to shew us how little we know what is for our good. Perhaps, in bitterness of spirit, she might herself pray to thee for that very consummation which has broken her heart, an' is now pressing her down to an early grave. If so, thou hast granted her request, but thou hast granted it in displeasure. O all-mighty an' just God, who can fathom the depth of thy judgment? It is higher than heaven, what can we do; it is deeper than hell, what *can* we understand? What shall we, or what can we, do to appease thy displeasure? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, or the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? If thou requirest it, I must; but, in the mean time, we leave with thee this night two broken an' contrite spirits, an' bow to thy decision, whatever it may be." * * * * * *

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The prayer, of which the above is without all doubt an imperfect sketch, having been the very overflowings of a plain and unsophisticated heart, affected the shepherd exceedingly,—for those in humble life are always most taken with humble metaphors and homely phrase; so that when Grizzy came to carry him off to the courting, she found him rivetted to the spot, attending closely to the parting words of the father and daughter, and sighing with deep concern. She hauled him away, however, and they slid quietly down stairs into the kitchen; but as it was impossible to make Grizzy serious for one minute, Davie had no heart for the hay-nook that night. He could not refrain from talking about what he had heard even to his irreverent auditor, and began by inquiring, "If she had any conception that their young mistress was dying?"

"Aw kens noughts about it ava, nor what conception is. Aw fancies that's a thing that there's somebody that aw kens unco feared for. An she be dyeing, aw thinks she maun

be dyeing *white*, for she has made somebody's chafts that aw kens unco bleached like."

"I hae na been as muckle affectit this lang time. Wow, but our master has rowth o' gude matter in him, an he could but find scholar-like expressions. He gart the tears come to my een oftener than aince."

"Aih, wow me! but aw's wae for thee! Did he no gi'e in a word for a' liars an' promise-brikkers?"

Grizzy thought of the half-hour's courting in the hay-nook.

"He put up gude petitions an' strang anes, Grizzy; an' by an' by, in a few days, he's gaun to put up ane to heaven, to cut a' aff thegither, you, an' me, an' the hale-wort o' us."

"De'il ca' him thank for that! He's no blate! Let him pray for his ain, to live or dee, as he likes; aw wants nae sic petitions. When hoddy-craws turn into doos, they're unco ill for picking out fock's een. Words are but peughs o' wind, they'll no blaw far, that's ae comfort.—Aih, wow me! but aw bes sleepry, an' has into the byre to gang

to look the kye the night yet! Hae, will ye carry the bouet for me, an' gang foremost?"

"I thought ye had been nae feared for outher ghaist or deil?"

"Auhaw! but thae new-fashioned prayers are no to lippen to. The tod kens his ain whalps amang a' the collie's bairns, an' gets that gowl in the Gans."

Davie was thus forced by stratagem to fulfil his promise to Grizzy, which, though refused at the time, was nevertheless expected; and she being of great comfort to Davie at meal-times, he always contrived to keep on good terms with her, at the expense of a few kind words now and then, or a kiss in the dark. It so happened, that Davie's ewes would scarcely ever let him home to his meals at the same time with the rest of the servants; of course he had to dine alone, when every good bit in the house fell to Davie's share. Even his sagacious dog, Miller, looked as plump as a justice; and never failed, on entering the kitchen, to

wag his bushy tail, and lick witty Grizzy's hand. But at length it so happened, that Grizzy's marriage was actually brought about with Davie, and that by the same means that two-thirds of Border marriages in the lower class are effected.—A sad change for poor Miller, as well as Davie's cheek-blade, now that he and Grizzy have to furnish food for their own stall.

CIRCLE VIII.

A FEW days more passed over at Bellsburnfoot in the silent melancholy of piercing grief. Daniel had told his wife and son-in-law of his daughter's hideous forebodings, and asked their opinion of the matter. M'Ion said, he did not deem that, in the course of the disease, her dissolution could be so nigh; but that such a rooted apprehension was sufficient to cut off a person in perfect health, and how much more one whose distemper prompted her to indulge in visionary sorrows to the wildest extreme! On the whole, he said, he greatly dreaded the event; and it behoved them to take some decisive measures to put the time over, which being effected, there was a chance of her recovery.

This gave great comfort to the tender-hearted and almost despairing father. I say *almost* despairing, for he still retained a hope, that the Almighty would hear his fervent petitions in behalf of his child, which were now offered up evening and morning, and often in private through the day. Yea, sometimes as he was sauntering by himself, and communing with his heart, his faith rose to that pitch, that he assured himself, " a father's prayers wad *no* be suffered to mix an' blaw away i' the winds o' the glen, or to glaister on the hill-side like a cauld shower o' sleet, unless it war for wiser purposes than his sight could tak in." As for Mrs Bell, she still deprecated the idea of any danger. Mrs Johnson knew first of all her beloved child's strange forebodings, and gave in to them with too much assurance that they would prove true, but with a resolution to avert the blow in the end, if human aid or ingenuity could aught avail. She communicated with her son, who approved of all she had done, and joined with her in projecting to do all in their

power to get the hour of anticipated dissolution over; but what was best to be done, none of them could devise. As yet the sufferer had never divulged her apprehensions to her husband; she had never spoken any thing to him but hope and comfort. But she once, on the Thursday, said to him, that she was distressed in spirit, and begged that he would pray with her. He did so, and, though shortly, in so sublime and pathetic a manner, that she was melted into a flood of tears; and, when he finished, she hung on his neck, and kissed him. "Well as I have loved you," said she, "and that has been as never woman loved, I never knew till this moment what a treasure I possessed. These are not the words of one who is a stranger to the mysteries of redeeming grace, but bespeak a heart and tongue well used to divine supplication. Thanks be to God, the bond that united us here has its fastening in a sure place, to which we shall be drawn the one after the other, and again united."

The Saturday at length arrived which Gatty had announced as the last day that she was to live; for she had told it to her father and Mrs Johnson in confidence, with the fullest assurance, " that on the next Sabbath morning, between the second and third crowing of the cock, she should depart this life."

From the Tuesday she kept herself confined to her room for the most part, though from no apparent cause that any stranger could have discovered. She remained all the while quite cheerful; and often a wild unstable ray of happiness flashed from her eyes, proceeding from anticipations of a sublime but unknown state of existence. She seldom looked abroad upon the face of nature, for she had not that delight in the beauty of terrestrial objects that her late cousin possessed. The latter was the pure unsophisticated child of nature; this, of refined passion, feeling, and the most romantic devotion. She employed herself most in reading her Bible, or rather in searching through it, and marking certain places with

initials, as with intention that her friends should peruse and take delight in these passages when she was no more. Every day brought the dreaded Sabbath morning a step nearer to Daniel's door, and each succeeding day his soul clung closer and closer to his child. His very existence seemed to be bound up in hers; and before the close of the week, whenever he came into her presence, his breathing consisted of short vehement sighing, resembling the distant sound of a water-wheel. His frame was bowed down,—his features changed to those of the most overpowering sorrow; and ever and anon, as he listened to her sweet weakened voice, that breathed nothing but filial love and tenderness, he lifted up his woe-bedimmed eyes to Heaven in the most imploring manner, manifestly saying in his heart, "O Lord, wilt thou indeed rend this jewel from all our bosoms?" On these occasions, his lips were often observed to be moving, though no modulation of sound issued; his prayer was too deep and full of agony for expression, and seemed as if, by an involuntary

gasp of the soul, it had been drawn from the external air into the heart. He would not say prayers before any of the family save herself; for when urged to suffer them to be present, he objected to it, and said, " he always felt as if they stood between God and him." His prayers became every day more fervent, until at the last it grew so painful to hear him, that even Davie could not listen. But on the final Saturday he was more resigned, and appeared either determined to submit patiently to the divine will, or else convinced that his prayers had been heard, and that God would grant a reprieve of this mysterious sentence.

Gatty arose on that day at her usual hour, and after praying with her father, as was her wont, she desired to be left alone. She then dressed herself carefully in her bridal apparel, which was all of the purest snowy white, and when thus gorgeously but decently equipt, she sent for her husband. He pretended great astonishment at seeing her look so fresh and beautiful. She smiled and seemed pleased with the compliment;

he then took her gently in his arms, kissed and caressed her, endeavouring all that he could to turn her mind away from the bias to which he knew well it was tending, and her affection for him was such, that she listened long with apparent delight, unwilling to mar his joyful anticipations. He talked of the scenery of the Mid-Highlands,—the dark forests of pine,—the towering Grampian pyramids that rose behind these, and that, rising above the mists of the morning, appeared like the thrones of angels hung between the earth and heaven. Then he spoke of the thousand cataracts of the mountains that were now her own, every one of them haloed by their tiny rainbows, while the majestic arch of everlasting promise spanned the glen above them all, uniting heaven and earth into one sphere of radiant and celestial glory. Gatty listened with delight, which was alone caused by his enthusiasm, for to her the beauties of external nature offered no such object of admiration. Her soul yearned after glories more beatific, and indulged in shadowing out to itself

scenes beyond the comprehension of mortal fancy. She therefore took hold of the expression, "everlasting promise," to break forth in raptures of delight on the sweet promises of the Gospel,—the promises of eternal life and salvation by a Redeemer, from which she verged designedly, but, as it were, quite naturally, to the sinfulness, the sorrows, and constant misery of this present state of existence, and how happy she deemed those that were early removed from it. "Do not you think so, my dear Diarmid?" added she. "Confess to me that you do, and that the more dearly you loved a friend, you would rejoice the more that that friend was called early home to her father's house before the days of sorrow arrived, and the years in which there is no pleasure."

"Nay, but we have duties to fulfil here, my love—duties of a social nature, from which it is sinful to shrink," returned he. "The soul of man is so constituted, that, whether here or hereafter, we must partake of our joys with others, else they are no real joys. Happy, indeed, may they be who are

cut off in early bloom; but surely more happy are they, who, after fulfilling the Christian duties of a long life, are taken away from the midst of an affectionate and virtuous offspring."

Gatty wept, and said she hoped to have heard his sentiments correspond better with her own, in which case the intelligence she had to impart might have been shorn of all its arrows. "Has it never struck you," added she, "that I am a dying person?"

"We are all dying creatures, my dearest Gatty," said he. "But I hope the day of our separation is yet far distant. And, believe me, I take this moping melancholy mood of yours exceedingly ill. It appears as if you were weary of my love and fellowship, and those of your friends, and wanted to escape from us like a truant before your time. You are ruining a constitution naturally good, by indulging in feelings so intense and vehement that no human frame can withstand them for any length of time. Indeed I am angry with you, and beseech you to cheer up your heart, which is the on-

ly anodyne that can restore you to perfect health, and this family to its wonted happiness."

She took his hand in hers, pressed it, and wet it with her tears. "We must part, Diarmid," said she. "The efforts of man cannot prevail against the hand of the Almighty. It is decreed that we must part, and that before the dawning of the day of the Son of Man."

"You are raving, my love," said he; "and have mistaken the dreams of a morbid fancy for the revelation of heaven. Let me hear no more of such fantasy, else I will indeed think that you are weary of me, and do not love me."

"Sure you will not deny that there is still a possibility of a communication between God and man?" said she.

"Yes I deny it,—positively I deny it," returned he; "or if there were, what right have you or I to presume on being those favoured individuals, out of so many millions wiser and better than we?"

"I believe in it. I have prepared my-

self for my change," said she, "and have taken a final leave of all things in this world, save of him that I love more than all the world beside, which I will not do till my last hour. And now I have told you the secret impression of my heart, in the truth of which I have the most sacred reliance. If I live to see the light of a new day, I shall never more believe in divine revelations to man, in these latter days of the Gospel. Now I will talk with you about any thing you please during the remainder of the day; but I would rather our converse were about an hereafter. In this you may indulge me, corresponding with the views I have taken up,—be they true or false, the subject is one of the highest interest and sublimity."

They talked of future existence till the close of even; of the interminable joys of the paradise above, and the journeying of blessed spirits through the millions of radiant orbs in the immeasurable bounds of creation. He never parted from her side; and when her spirits began to sink, he adminis-

tered small portions of a cordial elixir, that had the effect of soothing her irritated nerves, and exalting her spirits to such a degree, that she seemed several times to be basking in the full fruition of mental delight. She again and again declared, as the evening wore to a close, that she had never in all her life spent so happy a day; and once added, "For a few such days as this it would *indeed* be worth one's while to live!"

The rest of the family were coming and going the whole day, and all delighted to see her so well; but M'Ion never quitted her side. Toward midnight she fell into a restless slumber, and on waking out of it testified considerable uneasiness, calling out to give her more of the delicious elixir, which she called the elixir of life and joy. "Give me fulness of it," said she, "for I long exceedingly to drink of it, feeling as it were to me the water of life."

He again mixed her up a cordial, which he sweetened and diluted with wine and water, and gave her it to drink. She lifted up her eyes, and her lips moved as if im-

ploring a blessing on it from above, and drank it off. Then saying that she felt a great deal better and more comfortable, she stretched herself upon the bed, and breathed some fervent ejaculations in a whisper. "O these longings, these longings after the delights of mortal life! Woe's my heart for them! Woe's my heart for them! These joys of connubial love! Shall they again wean my heart from thee? Come, blessed Jesus, and work a thorough change in my heart before I step out of one being into another.—Dearest husband, how wears the night?" added she aloud.

"It is about the fall of midnight, love; the morning, I think, approaches. And as lovely a night it is as at this late season I have looked on."

"I wish I go not to sleep too soon, for I should have much to do before the second watch of the morning. Will you give place to my father for a short time, dear husband? and kiss me before you go, lest it be long, long ere we meet again."

"I will kiss you till the night be over

I will read with you, pray with you, watch with you, or do whatever you please; but indeed I cannot leave you to-night, with these dismal forebodings preying on your dear heart. Why may not all our friends join, that we may sing a psalm of humiliation together?"

"O be it so! be it so! there is nothing so sweet," said she; "sing what verses you yourself please; but this psalm is not to be the last. My father has directions for that —he is to sing the last one, and I would wish to depart singing it. Therefore, as long as I am able to speak, will you tell him to begin at the second crowing of the cock, and sing it over and over till I appear no more to feel or understand it? Perhaps I may be able to give directions myself; but, alas! I know not what pangs I may have to undergo in the dreadful separation of matter from mind."

M'Ion was struck dumb at hearing such expressions, and trembled to think of the present state of his beloved's mind. But he had secretly given her in the last cup a

composing or rather sleeping draught, and had high hopes that she would fall into a profound slumber, and sleep out the anticipated hour of dissolution, and that the effect of this on her enthusiastic and prophetic mind might be attended with the most happy consequences. The plan was undoubtedly a good one; he approved of it in his heart, and exulted in contemplating the result. But it was impossible to be in that young lady's company, in her present state of excitement, without partaking of her solemn and awful feelings. It must have been utterly impossible; for the whole group, none of whom had at all been noted as devotees, seem at that time to have entered deeply into the same holy rapture of impassioned devotion. M'Ion, with all his command over his demeanour, and all his assurance of the success of his scheme, entered into the solemn impressions of the moment with an ardour not to be exceeded. He sung a part of the beautiful 63d psalm; and bowing on the bed-side, he prayed over the pale and lovely form, as she lay extend-

ed in her bridal robes, in a strain which shewed how truly his petitions flowed from the heart. But he begged her life of the Almighty in a manner too absolute, and altogether incompatible with human submission. In the midst of this passionate aberration, as he paused to breathe, she said to him in a whisper, and with a sigh, drawn as it were from the deepest recess of the heart, "Oh! don't, my love! don't!—Father, forgive him, for he knows not what he is saying!"

He, however, went on to an end in the same strain; and by the time he had finished, she had fallen so very low that she could scarcely lift her eyes, or articulate a word. It being now about that hour of the morning on which she had foretold that her death should happen, they were all plunged in the deepest distress, as well as seized with benumbing consternation, save M'Ion himself, who never doubted the success of his potion; and perhaps on that ground asked too unqualifiedly of the Almighty, what he believed his own ingenuity had provided for,

in a way altogether natural. She lifted her languid and drowsy eyes toward her father's face; her lips moved as if in the act of speaking, and perhaps she believed she was speaking, but no sound was heard. The old man was drowned in tears, and convulsed with weeping; and as he laid down his ear, endeavouring to catch the half-modulated aspirations, the cock crew. It was a still dark morning, and the shrill clarion note rang through every apartment of the house, although it came from a distance, across a small court. Every one started at the sound, as if touched by electricity, and every eye watched the motion of all the others. "Is that the first or second crowing?" whispered Mrs Johnson. None of them knew; but none of them could say they had heard the bird's note before. The sound also struck on Gatty's ear, all faint and motionless as she lay. She gave a gentle shiver, spread both her hands, and again lifting her eyes to her father's face, she pointed to the Bible, and articulated the monosyllable, "Now," in a whisper scarcely audible. "O, my child!

my child!" cried Daniel, as he took the Bible on his knee—"My dutiful, my loving, my angelic child! must I indeed lose thee! O Lord, why art thou thus laying thy hand upon us in thy hot displeasure? Can they who descend into the darksome grave praise thy name, or do thee honour?"

"Be calm, dear sir," said M'Ion; "be calm and composed, for our darling only slumbers, and will awake refreshed in the morning."

"Ay! on the morning of the resurrection day, she will awake," said Daniel. "That is not a face of earthly slumber."

"The lovely visage is strangely altered," said Mrs Johnson. "O God! O God! I fear that the great and last change is indeed going on!"

"No, I tell you no," said M'Ion; "believe me, I know better; therefore be composed, and proceed to sing the verse of the psalm that you, sir, know of; for she charged me, that we should all join in singing it at this time of the morning!"

Daniel, with many sobs and tears, sought

out the place; for there was a mark laid at it, so that it was easily found, else it had not been found by him; and when he beheld the single verse marked round with red ink; and on the margin, written with her hand, "the last," he burst out in weeping anew. As was said before, it was the 5th verse of the 31st psalm.

"Into thine hands I do commit
My soul; for thou art he,
O thou Jehovah, God of truth!
Who hast redeemed me."

Daniel read it over, and then the group joined in singing it, which they did in low and plaintive strains; but she over whose couch it was sung took no share in the sacred strain. She lay silent and composed without breath or motion, and every feature of the late lovely face appeared to be gradually undergoing a singular metamorphosis. When the strain ceased, all their faces instantly hung over hers. "Is there any life remaining?" said Daniel.

"Alas, the conflict is over!" said Mrs Johnson. "Thence has fled the most

elevated soul that ever animated frame so young!"

"I tell you no, mother," said M'Ion rebukingly; "I beseech you to be calm, and wait the issue with Christian fortitude. I tell you that life *is not* extinct, although there is a cessation of vitality that I cannot comprehend. It is a death-like sleep, still it is only but a sleep. Believe me, it is nothing beyond.—Please, sir, let us sing these solemn lines once more, as our darling requested." He said this to get quit of their inquiries for a space, for at this time he could feel no pulsation, and was himself in great astonishment, although still convinced it could be nothing but a deep sleep produced by his opiate on a system irritated and exhausted by intense straining over ecstatic visions. Daniel complied with his son-in-law's request, and they sung the stanza over once again, and again their anxious inquiries prevailed. These were now altogether hopeless, on looking at the altered features. Daniel leaned his head on his two hands to weep. Mrs Johnson began to give way

to the most passionate expressions of woe; and Mrs Bell, who had scarcely articulated a word during that momentous evening, having no language of her own for such depth of sorrow, stood in a wan and half frigid state; the matter having so far outrun her calculation, that she seemed petrified. But her habitual self-command prevailed; she lighted a candle, and with a gait perfectly upright, but in a hurried pace, went to look after the dead-linens. M'Ion still sat on the bed, with his left arm below the sleeper's head, and his palm resting on the jugular vein; his right lay across her delicate breast, and was pressed on the region of the heart; and it so happened, that by a certain power of sympathy which has often been noted to exist between the living and the newly dead, but has never been thoroughly explained, whenever he moved either of his hands there was a palpable muscular motion took place that shook her whole frame. Not adverting in the least to this phenomenon, M'Ion still took it for the nervous shiver of a disturbed sleeper, and

maintained his point that she was not dead, but fallen into a deep sleep, or rather a trance. In what state she then was, it will never be in the power of man to decide. The issue turned out so terrible, that the whole matter has always appeared to me as much above human agency as human capacity; if any can comprehend it from a plain narration of the incidents as they succeeded one another, the definition shall be put in their power; but farther I take not on me to decide.

M'Ion kept his anxious position, and still with the same decided assurance—Mrs Bell remaining long absent, turning and tumbling over the contents of drawers. Mrs Johnson several times looked into that face over which her son hung with such unwearied hope. But at every time she turned away with a groan, saying, "Oh, Diarmid! Your hope is folly! It is worse—it is madness!" But no—nothing would make him yield up that hope; he held fast his integrity, and sat patiently waiting for her resuscitation. Mrs Bell returned with all

the paraphernalia of dead-clothes and holland sheets whereon to lay out her deceased daughter. She stood with these in her arms at the bed-side for a long space, listening to the verdict of life or death,—one said Yes, another said No, and both with the same degree of assurance. "What is this?" said she. "Are you all deprived of your senses, that you cannot decide on the most obvious thing in nature?"

She laid aside the linens, and first felt her child's feet and then her hands,—the chill, cold damps of death were settled on them.—"Son, your hope is vain," said she; "it is worse, it is preposterous, the body is already turning cold and stiff." Then lifting the candle, she looked into the face, and, like the other, turned away with a groan, desiring M'Ion to leave the body and retire, in a peremptory manner. He could not be moved, but still kept his position, although apparently now beginning to doubt. Daniel likewise looked into the bed, and the ghastly features of death being also too ob-

vious to his eyes, he began to entreat his son to come away. But for a while he refused, sitting still in utter despondency.

"The ways of heaven are indeed wonderful!" exclaimed he. "I could have believed any thing in nature sooner than this! Sure my beloved wife cannot be reaved from me thus? No, no, it is impossible,—my mind cannot take it in. I will not credit man or woman on this reverse."

The father and mother again besought him, and led him away reluctantly from the body, while the two sorrowful matrons set about laying it out, and dressing it in all due form. Daniel and M'Ion retired to the parlour, but were both too much overcome with grief to enter into any conversation. Their language consisted of short exclamations of astonishment, scarcely leavened with due submission to the hand that had given and taken away; but whether either of them blamed the decrees of Heaven as unjust, or did not blame them, could not afterwards be called to remembrance; but a shade of remorse hung over both their

consciences for a season, on account of some aggression of that nature.

M'Ion, now left in a great measure to his own cogitations, could not reason himself into a belief that his lady had actually departed this life, without any apparent natural cause of dissolution, farther than a preconceived idea that she was to die at that moment. This he thought might have killed her, had he not taken care privately to steep her senses in soft forgetfulness by a gentle sleeping draught, and he was persuaded she was in a drowsy and slumbering state before the predicted hour arrived, and was sensible neither of its approach nor of its presence. As to the draught he had administered to her, it was of so gentle a nature, that, on a person of full health, it would have had scarcely any effect at all, and was only calculated to compose one to sleep whose frame was debilitated by too much mental irritation. He was sure of this; and, therefore, having no dread on account of his potion, he could discover no *natural* cause whatever for his loved lady's

hasty dissolution, and he was no believer in prodigies. Consequently, he became more convinced than ever, that it was only a temporary cessation of life, and that, in all human probability, she would survive. He resolved on visiting the corpse once more, and mentioning his resolution to Daniel, the latter tried to dissuade him from it, but his arguments proved weak and inefficient, for a slender hope was also rekindled in his own bosom; so prone is the anxious human mind to linger around the dying form of one beloved, and to hope even after the pale lamp of probability is extinguished. Well may this pertinacity be wondered at; but so it was, that the two agreed to set out on their forlorn expedition.

The two matrons had laid out the slender and elegant form with all manner of decorum,—the hands were tied to the sides, and the limbs bound with many shreds of the purest muslin,—the dead robes were put on, adorned with many pale roses and edgings of lace, from the head to the foot, and the cambric napkin that was tied over the

face was of a texture so fine, that the mould of every feature was still discernible. It was on a still, dark morning of October, and just about the break of day, that the two friends tapped gently at the door of the dead chamber. "Who is there?" inquired Mrs Bell, sternly. The door had been bolted to prevent all undue interruption, and as M'Ion turned the handle in vain, he answered, "Pray, grant me admission for a little while. I cannot rest unless I look at the dear form once more."

"No," said Mrs Bell. "The face of the dead does best to be hid from the eye of the living. It is unmeet to be prying into the chambers of death. Be content, and remain where you are."

"I request admission for a short space," returned he. "I cannot otherwise have rest; therefore, pray, suffer us both to come in."

"It is hard to refuse so small and so tender a boon," said Mrs Johnson, rising to open the door, which she did; and the moment M'Ion entered the room, so mighty

was that undefined power of sympathy between his frame and the body of the deceased, that the latter started with a muscular motion so violent that it seemed like one attempting to rise. No one perceived this momentary phenomenon save Mrs Bell, who at the instant chanced to be arranging something about the body. She was struck motionless, and sunk back speechless on the seat. The two men entered; and, unapprized that any thing was the matter with the good dame, went straight forward to the bed. M'Ion, in the eagerness of hope and anxiety, laid his hand hastily on the breast, to feel if there were yet any motion of the heart. The body, from the same cause as before, started and shrunk, though not so violently, on which he raised his hands in ecstacy, and exclaimed, "Thanks be to the Almighty, the spark of life remains in her dear breast, and she may yet be restored to our prayers without any violation of the laws of nature!"

"Alas, alas! I cannot believe it," said Daniel, laying his hand also on the body. "It

is only an illusion of your distempered fancy; all is cold here now! The spirit of my bairn is gane to its unkend place of residence."

M'Ion again laid his hand on the breast of the deceased, (if that term be proper,) and still there was a slight muscular motion, though at that time hardly perceptible. Daniel, however, felt it, and lifting up his hands and eyes, he cried out in ecstacy, "Yes, yes! Blessed be his name, there are certainly some remains of life! O let us pray to God! Let us pray to God! for no other hand can now do any thing for us but his."

With that he prostrated himself on the bed, with his brow leaning on his dear child's peaceful bosom, and cried to the Almighty to restore her, with so much fervency and bitterness of spirit, that even the hearers trembled, and durst hardly say Amen in their hearts. Poor man! He neither knew for what he asked, nor in what manner his prayer was to be answered. Let the issue be a warning to all the human race, cautioning them

to bow with humble submission to the awards of the Most High. While in the midst of his vehement and unrestrained supplication, behold the corpse sat up in the bed in one moment! The body sprung up with a power resembling that produced by electricity. It did not rise up like one wakening out of a sleep, but with a jerk so violent that it struck the old man on the cheek, almost stupifying him; and there sat the corpse, dressed as it was in its dead-clothes, a most appalling sight as man ever beheld. The whole frame appeared to be convulsed, and as it were struggling to get free of its bandages. It continued, moreover, a sort of hobbling motion, as if it moved on springs. The women shrieked and hid their faces, and both the men retreated a few steps, and stood like fixed statues, gazing in terror at seeing the accomplishment of their frantic petitions. At length M'Ion had the presence of mind to unbind the napkin from the face. But what a face was there exhibited! It was a face of death still; but that was not all. The most extraordinary

circumstance was, that there was not, in one feature, the slightest resemblance to the same face only a few hours before, when the apparent change took place from life into death. It was now like the dead countenance of an idiot,—the eyes were large and rolled in their sockets, but it was apparent that they saw nothing, nor threw any reflection inward on an existing mind. There was also a voice, and a tongue, but between them they uttered no intelligible word, only a few indistinct sounds like the babble of a running brook. No human heart could stand this; for though the body seemed to have life, it was altogether an unnatural life; or rather, the frame seemed as if agitated by some demon that knew not how to exercise or act upon any one of the human powers or faculties. The women shrieked, and both of them fell into fits on the floor. M'Ion stood leaning against a bed-post, shading his face with his hand, and uttering groans so prolonged, and in a voice so hollow and tremulous, that it was frightful to hear him; in all that terrible scene there

was nothing so truly awful as these cries the distracted husband, for cries they certainly were, rather than groans, though modulated in the same manner. To have heard these cries alone from an adjoining apartment, would almost have been enough to have put any ordinary person out of their right mind. Daniel, when her face was first exposed to view, staggered backward like one stunned, until he came to a seat beside the entrance door, on which he sunk down, still keeping his eyes fixed on the animated corpse. He was the first to utter words, which were these:—"Oh, sirs, it's no her! It's no her! It's no her! They have looten my bairn be changed. Oh God, forgie us! What's to come o' us a' now wi' that being?"

Death would now have been a welcome visitor indeed, and would have relieved the family from a horror not to be described; but now there was no remedy; there the creature sat struggling and writhing, using contortions both in body and feature that were truly terrific. No one knew what

to do or say; but as they were all together in the same room, so they clung together, and neither sent for divine nor physician, unwilling that the deplorable condition of the family, and the nakedness of their resources, should be exposed to the blare of the public voice.

Mrs. Bell was the first to resume as much courage as again to lay hands on this ghastly automaton, which her pride and dignity of spirit moved her to, although in a half-stupified state. "You see what you have brought us to by your unsanctified rhapsodies," said she. "This is the just hand of Heaven. There is no doubt, however, that it is the body of my child, although it appears that the soul is wanting."

"Na, na, na!" exclaimed Daniel, "that's no my bairn! The spirits hae brought an uncouth form an' changed it on ye, an' the body of my dear bairn's ta'en away. Ye hae neither had the Bible aneath the head, nor the saut an' the candle aboon the breast. Never tell me that that's the face o' my

Gatty. Dead or alive, hers was a bonny face. But what's that like?"

Mrs Bell loosed the bandages from the hands and the feet, though not without great perturbation; but she suffered the dead-clothes to remain on the body, in the hopes that it might still die away. She tried also to lay it backward, and compose it decently on the bed, but felt as if it were endowed with unnatural force, for it resisted her pressure, and rebounded upwards. It also lifted its hand as if with intent to put away her arm, but could not come in contact with it. It was like the motion of one trying to lay hold of something in a dream. It was not long, however, till the body fell backward of itself, and with apparent ease turned itself half over in the bed with its face away from the light. This was a sensible relief to the distracted group; they spread the sheets again decently over the frame, remained all together in attendance, and by the time that the sun rose they heard distinct and well-regulated respirations issuing from the bed.

It is impossible to give any thing like a fair description of the hopes, the terrors, and the transitions from one to another of these, that agitated the individuals of that family during this period of hideous suspense. These were no doubt proportioned to their various capacities and feelings; but there is as little doubt that they were felt to a degree seldom experienced in human nature. There lay the body of their darling—of that there could be no doubt, for they had never been from its side one moment—but the judgment of God seemed to be upon them; for they all felt an inward impression admonishing them that the soul had departed to the bosom of its Creator at the very moment foretold by its sweet and heavenly-minded possessor, and that the Almighty had, in derision of their unhallowed earnestness for the prolongation of a natural life, so little worthy of being put in competition with a heavenly one, either suffered the body to retain a mere animal existence, or given the possession of it to some spirit altogether unqualified to exercise the organs

so lately occupied by the heaven-born mind. Yet, when they saw the bed-clothes move, and heard the regular breathings, they experienced many a thrilling ray of hope that all they had witnessed might have been the effect of some strong convulsion, and that she might yet be restored to mental light, to life, and to all their loves. Every time, however, that they stole a look of the features, their hopes were blasted anew.

For three days and three nights did this incomprehensible being lie in that drowsy and abstracted state, without tasting meat or drink, nor did she seem affected by any external object, save by M'Ion's entrance into the room. On such occasions, she always started, and uttered a loud and unintelligible noise, like something between laughing and anger; but the sound soon subsided, and generally died away with a feeble laugh, or sometimes with an articulation that sounded like "No-no-no!"

All this time no servant or stranger had been suffered to enter that chamber; and, on the third day, they agreed to raise up this

helpless creature, and endeavour to supply nature with some nourishment. They did so; and now, inured to an intensity of feeling that almost rendered them desperate, they were enabled to inspect the features, and all the bodily organs, with the most minute exactness. The countenance had settled into something like the appearance of human life,—that is, it was not so thoroughly the face of a dead person as when it was at first reanimated; the lips had resumed a faint dye of red, and there were some slight veins on the cheeks, where the roses had before blossomed in such beauty and such perfection. Still it was a face without the least gleam of mind—a face of mere idiotism, in the very lowest state of debasement; and not in one lineament could they find out the smallest resemblance between that face, and hers that had so lately been the intelligent and the lovely Agatha Bell. M'Ion studied both the contour and profile with the most particular care, thinking that these must have remained the same; but in neither could the slightest likeness be found

out. They combed her beautiful exuberance of hair, changed her grave-clothes for others more seemly, and asked her many kind questions, all of which were either unheard or disregarded. She swallowed the meat and drink with which they fed her with great cagerness, but yet she made no motion for any more than was proffered to her. The entrance of M'Ion into the room continued to affect her violently, and nothing else besides; and the longer his absence had been, the more powerful was the impression on her frame, as well as on her voice and tongue,—for that incident alone moved her to utterance.

It would be oppressive and disgusting farther to continue the description of such a degradation of our nature,—all the more benign faculties of the soul revolt from the contemplation of such an object; let it suffice, that she continued so long in the same state, maintaining a mere animal, or rather vegetable existence, that it was judged proper, and agreed to by them all, that she should be conveyed to a private asylum,

established for the accommodation and treatment of persons of distinction suffering under the most dreadful of all human privations. This was soon effected, and managed with all manner of secrecy, so that the country might never know the real circumstances of the case. M'Ion retired to the Highlands, where he took possession of the extensive property of his forefathers, and endeared himself to his people by every species of kindred attachment. He repaired the Castle of M——, planned a new village, and planted an extensive forest, endeavouring all that he could to forget the disastrous events that had marred and sullied the pure stream of his early affections; but alas! these were too deeply rooted in the soul ever to be wholly eradicated!

Daniel Bell jogged about in a melancholy frame of mind; and notwithstanding the terrible issue of his first great effort in religious matters, he continued the constant perusal of the Holy Scriptures—had leaves folded in at all the places marked by his daugh-

ter's hand, and over these he shed many a tear of fond remembrance.

Mrs Johnson took furnished lodgings in Edinburgh, on some pretence or other connected with the movements of her son, but, in reality, with the sole intent of often visiting the poor remains of her who had from infancy been her darling.

The principal physician of the asylum had orders to write to M'Ion every week, which he did; but his letters were all as much the same as a bulletin of a royal patient's health;—they merely stated, that his lady continued in an improving state of bodily health, but, in her intellectual capacity, there was no visible alteration. Mrs Johnson, who had frequent communications with this gentleman, also wrote occasionally to her son; but neither was there a ray of hope conveyed by any of her letters, until the spring following, when he received one that awakened the most tender and unwonted feelings of the heart, and hastened his departure from the Highlands. This extra-

ordinary intelligence was no other than that the poor imbecile and degraded being, that had once been the partner of his bosom, was in a way soon to become a mother. M'Ion hastened to Edinburgh, and arriving at his mother's house, he testified the greatest impatience to see the object of his once fondest love and endearments; but from this his mother dissuaded him, on account of the extraordinary effect that his presence always produced on her nervous system, which might be attended with the worst of consequences. She had also written to Bellsburnfoot to the same purport, and it may well be conceived what powerful sensations were there excited. Old Daniel went again to his prayers; but he had now learned the most humble submission to the divine will, and never asked any thing unless on provisional conditions, seeming rather disposed to return thanks for every thing bestowed, even for the heavy rod that had been laid upon him, than to plead for any new favours, —a frame of mind the best suited to a sinful and short-sighted mortal. Joseph re-

mained at the college, and was merely given to understand something of his sister's miserable calamity, and that a temporary confinement and constant medical attendance had been judged requisite; but he had not then been made acquainted with the awful visitation of Providence that had befallen his family.

M'Ion now took and furnished a house in Edinburgh, at one of the points nearest to the asylum in which the shattered and degraded frame of his poor wife lodged; to that house he removed his mother, and they two waited there in the utmost anxiety, Mrs Johnson visiting the asylum once or twice every day. They had strong hopes, that, in the greatest trial of nature, and nature's affections, there would be a new dawning of reason after such a long night of utter darkness. But their fond expectations proved vain; for in due time this helpless and forlorn object was safely delivered of a son, without manifesting the slightest ray of conscious existence, or of even experiencing, as far as could be judged,

the same throes of nature to which conscious beings are subjected.

Here was now a new object of the deepest interest to them all.—A nurse was provided for the child in M'Ion's house, and there was he fostered in the arms, and under the eye, of his affectionate grandmother. He proved a healthy, active, and vigorous boy, possessing a great deal of his mother's native beauty.—He was baptized by the name of Colin, after the name of the grand-uncle who refused to disinherit his nephew when his own father had done so; and none save a husband, and grand-parents, to whom a son has been born in such circumstances, of whom there have been few in the world, can have the smallest conception of the parental fondness that was lavished over this child. M'Ion would fondle over him for hours together—would hang over him while asleep, shedding tears of joy on his head, as he kissed his fair composed brow, or blowzy cheek; and many were the tender prayers and vows that were breathed to Heaven on his behalf. Da-

niel came frequently all the way to town purposely to see him, and could hardly again drag himself away "frae the bit dear creature," as he expressed himself. On these occasions the nursery was perfectly filled with toys of every description. As the boy grew in stature he grew in spirit—he was as playful and frolicsome as a kitten—fierce in his resentment of supposed injuries; but withal possessed a heart so kind and obliging, that he would not offend or give pain to a living creature.—He was the darling and delight of all concerned with him, while she that gave him birth became as a thing altogether forgotten. Her condition—her very being, was a mystery hid with God, to which none of them dared so much as to turn a scrutinizing glance, or hazard an investigation even in the still depths of solemn reflection—she was as a thing that had been—that still continued to be, and yet was not!

After a lapse of three years, it so happened, that Daniel, who was then in town, M'Ion, and Mrs Johnson, chanced one night

very late to be all three sitting before a blazing fire in M'Ion's splendid dining-room. There was none present but themselves; and by a natural concatenation of ideas, their discourse was carried backward to a certain painful period of their eventful connection. They had before that been rather disposed to be merry, or at least happy and joyful together.—There was wine on the table, but no glass had been filled for more than an hour.—Daniel had thrown off his leggins and strong shoes, and had placed both his feet up on the side of the grate next him, at the risk of singeing his pure-white lamb-wool stockings; M'Ion held a newspaper in his hand, in order to amuse them with a sentence now and then, should the conversation flag; and Mrs Johnson had put on her green spectacles, to be ready to listen.—But there was no pause occurred in the conversation, until it reached a point that brought sensations with it which quite incapacitated M'Ion for unfolding the paper—for reading a single sentence from it, as well as the others for listening, if he had.

The conversation was about little Colin; for scarcely could his paternal grandmother talk of any thing else, save about his sayings and pranks. "He was galloping round and round the room to day," said she, "astride upon a staff, when a number of ladies were present, and making such a noise *hy*ing and *wo*ing, that I was obliged to reprove him several times; and at length I threatened to whip him. On this the little elf came riding up to my knee, crying *wo!* and bridling in his stick. 'Shuly you no whip poo Colin, gand-mamma?' said he. 'Yes, but I will whip poor Colin,' said I, 'and very sore too, if he don't make less noise.' 'Tinking Colin shall make no noise, den,' said he; and laying down his horse, he stretched up both his hands, and his dear little mouth to kiss me."

Daniel blew his nose with his forefinger and his thumb, and Mrs Johnson took off her green spectacles and wiped them. M'Ion kept his mouth shut, but he was either laughing or crying in his breast. "It was

a deevilish clever answer," said Daniel, " for a little monkey o' his years to gie."

" Years, sir !" exclaimed Mrs Johnson ; " He's so far beyond his years, that I am often afraid something will happen to him—he affects my heart more than all the rest of the world put together. There is a little boy, called Robert Forbes, with whom he plays a great deal, and of whom he is very fond. Robert lives with his mother and grandmother, the name of the latter being Mrs Colquhoon. Colin comes to me one day, and he says, with the most inquisitive face, ' Is Missy Coon ittle Yobbit's gand-mamma ?' ' Yes she is, my dear,' said I. ' An' is Missy Fobbis ittle Yobbit's gand-mamma too ?' ' No, my dear boy,' said I, ' she is his own mamma. Mrs Colquhoon is his *grand*-mamma, and Mrs Forbes is his own mamma.' ' But yan whe Colin's own mamma ?' said he. And after looking long in my face, and seeing that I could return him no answer, he turned about, and added in the most pathetic tone,—

'Poo Colin have no mamma!' No heart could stand the childish pathos of the remark, that knew what ours know! He laid both his hands on his head, and turned round his back to me.—'Poo Colin have no mamma!' said he. The sweet, helpless little lamb! when I heard him say so, and in the way that he said it, I thought my heart would have bursted through my stays."

"An' mine will burst through my doublet, if ye dinna drap that subject," said Daniel. "That dings a' I ever heard or ever felt! How auld is the little dear brat?"

"He is only two years and three months," answered M'Ion.

"Ay; that he is, when you remind me!" returned Daniel. "Well may I remember that night, an'——" He cut his sentence short at this word, and looked in their faces with an unwonted degree of alarm—They remained silent. "What day of the month is this?" added he.

"It is the——" said M'Ion.

"This is the——" said Mrs Johnson.

Both of them attempted to answer the question; but when it came to their recollection what day of the month it was, none of them had power to pronounce the number. Then, indeed, a pause ensued in the conversation, and it was a long and a profound one. A scene of terror and dismay was conjured up to their remembrance, that had happened to them precisely on such a night, and on the very same night of all the nights in the year.

In the midst of this gloomy silence, their ears were saluted by the rapid approach of a carriage, which stopped short at the door, and in an instant the bell was rung. As they expected no visitor at that time of the night, they were not a little astonished at this, and sat in breathless suspense till the servant entered, and announced a gentleman, who wanted a private word of M'Ion in great express.

"Who is it?" said Mrs Johnson, much alarmed.

"Don't know, mem. His own carriage and footman in livery," said the servant.

"What can the chap be wanting at this time o' night?" said Daniel, putting on his shoes, expecting the man to come in and stay all night, as every man did who called at Bellsburnfoot at such an hour.

M'Ion went to the drawing-room, where he found the head surgeon of the private asylum, the gentleman sometimes mentioned before, waiting for him, with a face of great length and importance; who, without giving him time to ask how he did, or what was his business, accosted him as follows:—

"I fear, my lord, I am come to you on a mournful errand; but I judged it my duty to come and apprize you, that some important change is just about taking place on my hapless patient, your lady. And farther, my lord, as I always tell the plain truth, I must say, that I am afraid her dissolution is drawing on with a rapid progress. For some time past I have observed unusual symptoms in her case; but this day, since noon, she has been afflicted in an extraordinary manner, having been alternately

covered with a copious perspiration and stretched in cold rigidity—her complexion at one time blooming with the hues of the rose, and at another, overspread with the haggard features of death and distraction—such a case has never come under my eye. It appeared, for all the world, as if an angel and a demon had been struggling about the possession of her frame; and as if sometimes the one held the citadel, and sometimes the other. In short, it is evident that nature can but for a short while support the conflict, and perhaps, before we reach her, her doom may be sealed. I am the more convinced of the near approach of death, from the following most extraordinary circumstance, of her extraordinary case:—Just before I set out hither, I observed her labouring under some strong commotion; and when I took a light and looked into her face, with wonder I perceived that it bloomed with the beauty of a seraph, and possessed every line of deep intelligence. While I stood gazing with wonder, and almost doubting my own senses, she opened her languid eyes,

and in a feeble voice, but one of the sweetest cadence, asked me what the hour was."

"I would journey ten thousand miles to hear that tongue pronounce my name once more," said M'Ion; "and to view her once lovely face, again beaming with the rays of heavenly intelligence would be worth an age of sorrow to this forlorn heart. O sir, let us go!—let us go, without losing a moment!—Her own affectionate father is in the house, and my mother—We'll all go together—Come down, dear sir, and speak to them yourself—for Heaven's sake let us make haste!" And taking his arm, without giving him a moment's time, he ran down stairs with him, rushed into the dining-room, and said, "Come, dearest mother—come, let us go with this gentleman without delay—Mr Bell, you must go with us—Poor Gatty, he tells me, is at the point of death, and her reason is returned in her last moments—O make haste, and let us go, that we may hear her speak, and bless us in the name of Jesus before her final departure!"

Mrs Johnson came forward as if to

question the doctor; but her son in the height of impatience took her arm, and in an instant had her seated in the surgeon's coach. Daniel and the doctor followed them, and a few minutes brought them to the asylum, where, with palpitating hearts, they entered Gatty's apartment on tiptoe, and in breathless silence. The doctor whispered the nurse, inquiring how the patient did; but she only answered by putting her finger to her lips; and then raising it up on high, she shook it at the visitors by way of commanding profound quietness. They all took seats as they chanced to be standing in the apartment, arranged at a distance from one another. The doctor was obliged to withdraw, in order to visit some other patients in extremity, and there our three friends were compelled to sit in the most painful suspense, gazing on one another. The curtains were closely drawn; and whenever any one of the three made a motion to approach the bed, the same signal was repeated from a determined countenance of the utmost severity. They were not so much as suffered

to know if she was dying or dead—sleeping or awake—sensible or insensible—writhing in agony, or slumbering away life in calm repose; and all this apparently from the caprice of this important and arbitrary matron. It was about midnight when they arrived there, and for three hours and a half did they all submit to sit in silence and suspense. At length M'Ion lost all patience, and rising up he advanced towards the bed. The same signal was repeated; but he disregarded it, and went forward and seized the light. But the dame was not to be controlled in her own department—she seized his wrist with the firmness of a vice; and, as he did not choose to begin an engagement at handicuffs, she again took the light from him and motioned him to his seat. But perceiving that she would now be under the necessity of yielding up some little of her prerogative to their joint and reasonable impatience, she took the candle, went round the bed, and reconnoitred herself; listening the breathing at one time, then feeling the arm, and then looking into the face.

"Ay, there is some life still," said she. "You may now come and look at her if you list—Poor woman! Hers is a lovely face, now when it has no more to shine!"

M'Ion rushed round the bed, seized the light, and looked into her face. "O God! O God!" cried he in raptures, "it is my Gatty again!—My dearest love!—My life! —My better angel!—Do you yet know me?"

She lifted her hand, but not her eyes, and said, in a low whisper, with long pauses, "Yes, love. I know you—but—hush!—hush, and do not disturb me. The hour is near. Has the cock crowed?"

They all looked at one another with eyes that plainly indicated what painful recollections were coming over their minds. It was a renewal of the same scene that had occurred at Bellsburnfoot precisely three years before, and beginning, almost to a moment, at the very time of the morning that it terminated there by the departure of the reasonable soul. The old pertinacious nurse held up her hands, and with most puissant

gestures, declared, that " she could not have believed such a thing, had it been sworn to her on the Bible!" and added, " What a wonderful man that is! There never was such a man as our doctor!" Then drawing Mrs Johnson aside, she added, " It is true, I tell you, mem, there never was such a man for performing cures on the insane; and even though they baffle human skill all their lives, he generally contrives to bring them to their senses in their last moments, which I account a *great* comfort to their friends, as you will find in this instance."

She was going on lauding this great doctor, who had got her her place in the asylum; but Mrs Johnson shook her off, and joined her two friends at the bed-side, who were attentively watching the composed countenance of the resigned sufferer. That was now for the greater part beautifully intelligent, but by degrees the lines of death began again to pass over it. How they trembled! but none of them ventured to discompose her in her last trial by any remark. At length after two or three deep-drawn throbs at long

intervals, her pangs appeared to subside, and the bloom of youth and beauty again overspread her face. It came with a sudden flush, like the bright and ruddy blink of the morning before the darkness of the storm. "Alas!" said Mrs Johnson, "I fear this is the last effort of nature!—Good woman, can you not procure us the doctor's presence?"

"My husband's name, madam, was Mr Story," said the sick nurse, as she walked deliberately about, with her arms rolled up in her shawl, and crossed on her breast—"But as for the doctor, he must not be disturbed. The lives, the senses, and the comforts of so many depend upon his efforts, that he must have his time. What a wonderful man he is! He will visit her in her turn, be assured. Please to stand aside, and let me examine my charge. Ah, yes! All her sufferings and mental oblivion are over—the extremities are cold as marble. But what a comfort to you all, that her reason has been restored in her last mo-

ments! Thanks to the greatest and most useful man in existence!"

"Whisht! whisht, my woman!" said Daniel, mildly. "Mind the second commandment; an' dinna mak a graven image o' your doctor."

"Leave the room," said M'Ion; "leave it instantly."

"I am answerable to the doctor alone for my behaviour," said she; "and he knows whom to trust. Leave *you* the room, I say, every one of you—Come, come; dismiss, I say! you have staid too long. I am mistress here."

"This is intolerable," said M'Ion; and, seizing her in his arms, he carried her into the inner lobby, and bolted the door.

The three disconsolate friends were now left in peace to watch by the couch of their beloved; and fain would M'Ion have spoken to her, for he saw that she was in full possession of her reason, but he dared not, lest she might be undergoing great bodily and mental suffering. She was the first to speak

herself, which she did with great difficulty, her voice being scarcely audible, and her tongue apparently refusing its office. But every ear was attention to catch the syllables as she pronounced them.

"Ah! but the struggle is a long and a hard one! When shall I be set free from these bonds? Oh, you are not to pray such prayers over my dying couch again!"

She took fully two minutes in pronouncing these few words; and when she had done, M'Ion was so transported at hearing her voice again, that he could contain himself no longer, but threw his arms around her, kissed her lips and cheek, and exclaimed, "My dearest, dearest wife! May the Lord of life bless you, and fit and prepare you for whatever is his will concerning you; for life, for death, for judgment, or for eternity!"

"Amen," said she. "That is a sweet prayer, and one in which I can join with all my heart. O, when will the day dawn, and the shadows pass away? Is the third watch of the morning not yet come?"

"It is come, and passed over, love; and the day is near to the breaking," said M'Ion.

"Come, and passed over?" said she, lifting her mild eyes, and looking ruefully upward. "No—that cannot be. Do not jeer me at such a time as this."

"The hour that you dreaded is long overpast, my love," said he. "I do not trifle with you. And even now the day-beam is springing in the east."

"It has been a long night, but it has been a blessed one," said she. "What visions of glory I have seen!—But if it be true that you say, O when shall I see my Saviour's face?"

She gave each of them her hand, and blessed them; then stretching herself on the bed, in a few minutes she fell into a profound sleep, and they all remained in attendance. The doctor returned in the morning, bringing the expelled nurse along with him; and after examining his patient, he still pronounced her dying, and wondered that she had subsisted so long; "for the extremities are already growing cold,"

said he. "They are dead already; and she will now die upward to the heart."

"The extremities were cold as marble long ago, worthy sir," said the nurse, feeling them in her turn; "and suffer me to assure you, that the blood is gaining on the chillness, and that the crisis is past."

"Are you sure of that, Mrs Story?" said the doctor.

"I am," said she. "An hour ago, the limb was cold to the knee; and now it is lukewarm down to the heel. The arm is also warm to the wrist, which you may feel; and I ween, that in a little space, the hand will be all over in a glow."

The doctor's face sparkled with joy, as he turned to the friends, and assured them, that the critical moment was past, and that there was now not only a great chance for her instant recovery, but of long continued good health, if the event accorded with their hopes; "for in this long period of absolute torpidity," added he, "the frame must have, in a great measure, acquired a thorough renovation. It will be like that of a new crea-

ture, or a flower newly sprung from a root that the mildews of a former summer had blasted. I give you joy of this singular transition from utter oblivion, into a state of blessed and happy sensibility. In the mean time, the greatest care must be had for a season, that no kind of irritation be administered—that none of her passions or sensibilities be moved, but that life may be suffered to glide on as calmly as a summer's evening."

"This is indeed a wonderful cure!" exclaimed the nurse; "such a one as the annals of surgery cannot produce! The world does not yet know what a man it possesses!"

"I have had no hand in it," said the doctor; "if it, indeed, turns out as it promises, it is a wonderful recovery—a most wonderful one! But it is exclusively the work of all-powerful nature, or rather of His whose hand directs all her secret springs."

"Ah, yes! It is always thus," exclaimed the nurse. "His modesty and his de-

ference to Heaven, are even more pre-eminent than his profound skill."

The doctor smiled benevolently, and even condescended to shake the old parasite's hand. The most singular coincidence in nature, and the one most frequently to be remarked, is, *the highest talents* combined with the most *inordinate and unquenchable thirst of flattery.*

Gatty was conveyed in a sick chariot to her husband's house, and was all the while in a sound untroubled sleep; for though at times she lifted her eyes, and articulated a few words, she was manifestly insensible to all around her, and all that was going on; her lethargy continued for three days and nights; her slumber being all that time undisturbed, save by the administration of a few cordials, which her anxious friends deemed necessary for her subsistence. About the end of that period she began to revive; but her whole frame was so languid and powerless, that she seemed like a creature new to life and all its functions. She spoke with difficulty, looked around her with difficulty;

and at first she could not move any of her limbs, until they were moved for her; but at every succeeding effort, she gained a little; till at length, after the lapse of about twenty days, she was able to walk about her room with support; and in a short time after, to go into the drawing-room, which was on the same storey.

Nothing in life was ever more curious than the tenor of her ideas at this interesting period; and as her friends had the strictest charges not to move any of her feelings, they found themselves in hard dilemmas with her every day; and the worst thing of all was, that their various explanations did not correspond with one another, which made her consternation still to increase. It was many days ere she knew that she was not at Bellsburnfoot, and could not conceive why her mother never came into her room; but Mrs Bell having been sent for expressly, at length came, so that anxiety was stilled for the present. Others, of course, were started every day, although there was now a calmness and sedateness

in all her inquiries, that they could little have expected. She had been given to know, that she had lain in a sleepy insensible state for three days; and she now numbered the days of the month with great punctuality.

One day, about the end of the first week after her awaking, she was lying in bed, conversing with Mrs Johnson, when she observed that her mother had changed her hangings. "I can conceive the purport of this," said she; "but not where she has got that splendid set of curtains so suddenly."

Mrs Johnson, not knowing what answer to make, put it off by asking another question. "And, pray, what do you suppose was her purpose in providing these gorgeous hangings, my dear?" said she.

"It was to do honour to the mortal part of her honourable daughter," returned Gatty. "That the friends who came to see my corpse, might see my frail body lying in state. Good lady! I honour and respect her for this, as well as for believing in my prediction."

"You can scarcely either respect her or yourself the more on that account," said Mrs Johnson; "seeing it has happily turned out a false prediction."

"O, Mrs Johnson, do not term it a false one! There is something there that will puzzle and distract me as long as I live," said she. "Can it have been a false spirit that gave me that information?"

Mrs Johnson was alarmed on account of the subject into which they had been drawn, and made no answer; therefore Gatty added, "No; it is impossible it could have been from a false spirit that I had it; for it was in prayer that it was delivered to me, when in agony of spirit I was supplicating the Most High. I know not what to think of this. My life is a mystery to myself."

"It is a mystery to us all, and must ever remain so, my dear," said Mrs Johnson. "You do not yet know the extent of the mystery, nor ever will. But it is best and safest for us, to submit, not to inquire. Let it suffice that you are restored to a degree

of health which no living could have anticipated. Do you perceive no difference of your bodily frame?"

"Bless me, I am utterly astonished!" said she, "now that you remind of it, it appears to me as if my whole body were swollen. I am sleek, plump, and smooth; more like one that has been pampered in luxury, than lying at the point of death; and all in so few days too. I cannot comprehend this."

"I will astonish you yet further, my beloved daughter-in-law," said Mrs Johnson, playfully. "Let me comb and curl your hair, and dress you out like a Flanders babe, for your husband spends the day with you."

"Trouble me not with these vanities," said she; "I am very well dressed—clean and neat already."

She, however, sat up, and Mrs Johnson combed her flowing hair; and when she had done, she parted it, and threw it forward over her shoulders, so that it covered her breast, and flowed on the coverlet.

"Now I think I could stake any bet,"

said she, " that there is not in Scotland as beautiful a head of hair as my daughter's. Look at it yourself. What say you?"

" That's not my hair," said she. " You are quizzing me, Mrs Johnson." And with that she took hold of a portion of it with her one hand, and followed it up to the roots with the other, to feel whether or not it was really growing in her head.—" What *is* the meaning of this?" added she; " it is twice as long as it was last week, and twice as bulky; all that I see is beyond my weak comprehension."

" You have not yet, I tell you, seen one half the wonders that you will see," said Mrs Johnson. " I like to surprise those I love, when I can do it agreeably."

Gatty's spirits began to exhilarate. She suffered Mrs Johnson to adorn her head, and put a clean cymar on her body, richly adorned with lace; and when the delighted matron had accomplished all these to her mind, she went and brought Gatty a small mirror, and desired her to look how

she became them. She did so; and at the first, she looked three times over her shoulders, thinking she saw the face and form of another person. At length she smiled at what she conceived to be such an ingenious deception. Behold, the image in the glass also smiled! It was the face and smile of an angel in loveliness. A delicate blush overspread Gatty's soft features when she beheld this; and when she saw the figure colouring in the same manner, she gave the mirror hastily out of her hand, and laid herself down, covering her face. After a pause, she said, "There is something I cannot comprehend in all this. Something you do not tell me. What day of the month is this?".

"I believe it is the 30th of October."

"I believe the same, and accounted it so. How then is this, my dearest friend? Has there been a miracle wrought here?—A new creation? For my frame seems altogether remodelled."

"So long as the alteration is so much for the better, be content."

"Oh, I cannot endure to look at that face you shewed me just now; it has so much of a luxurious appearance—is so much of a pampered and guilty-looking thing, I cannot bear it. Pray, let me look at myself again, for I feel that I have a touch of infidelity in me relating to my own being."

Mrs Johnson humoured her in this with great readiness, and brought back the mirror; for she knew that it was not in the nature of woman to look at her own face, so much improven in beauty, and not be delighted; and though Gatty coloured every time she beheld hers, yet she called for the mirror, and looked at it four different times that forenoon. Then again she fell into deep meditations, and made further inquiries all to the same purpose. When at length M'Ion entered her chamber, there was a blush of conscious beauty overspread her features, that formed them into loveliness itself; and it had been so long since he had seen her attired, and covered with the bloom of health, that he was in perfect raptures, clasped her to his bosom, and blessed Heaven again and

again for her restoration. Still none of them dared to give her a hint of what she had suffered, or of her long state of utter desolation. They found that the period was lost in her estimation, as if it had never been—that three years, to an hour, was a total blank in her existence; and that she deemed the morning on which she awoke in possession of her right mind, in the private asylum, the dawning of the same on which she had prepared for her death at Bellsburnfoot. Therefore they agreed to let her come to the knowledge of the truth by degrees, as her mind might gather strength to bear it; for they soon perceived that a total change for the better had taken place in her constitution, as well as her intellectual perceptions, those appearing now to be better regulated, and not so absolutely under the influence of keen and incontrollable sensibility. She was still only in her twenty-first year, in the very height and blow of youthful beauty; and what a prospect now opened to her husband, who so dearly loved her,

and to all her friends, among whom she was the joy, the life, and the bond of unity! She had now no complaint, no ailment, but a feebleness, or want of ability in every part of her body—she was like a child learning to walk, as well as to use her hands; but, with every new attempt, she made advances in improvement, so that they were all perfectly at ease on account of that debility. Daniel was the happiest man in existence; and ever and anon as he came from amusing himself with little Colin into his daughter's room, the tears blinded his eyes; and then when he went again from the mother to the son, and beheld the striking likeness, he was affected in the same way. Often did he say, that "God was showering down blessings on an auld man's head, that could plead but few merits for the gracious boon. But O it's a pleasant thing," added he, "to hae a creditor that neither seeks principal nor interest frae ane!—a friend that a body can draw on at sight, or at five days after date! He has grantit me baith a new lease, and a renewal of an auld ane, and that without

either rent or grassum, but out o' sheer gude will and kindness; and it wad be unco ungratefu' in auld Dan ever to forget it."

The first day that Gatty came out of bed, she could not stand; the second, she could walk a few steps, after many attempts; and the third, around the room, between two of her friends. It was on that day that she first looked from the window, and perceived that she was not at Bellsburnfoot. The consternation that appeared in her looks alarmed them before they knew what was the matter. She had no great eye for external nature, but she noted at first sight that the scene was entirely new to her.

"Where am I?" cried she; "husband!—father!—where am I?"

"You are in your own house, my love, and hanging on your husband's and father's arms," said M'Ion.

"In what country, or what world am I then?" cried she—"This is not my father's house—I see now there is no part of it the same. And what towers and palaces are

these?—where am I? This is no house of my father's or mine."

"Yes, it is your own, my love, and every thing in it is your own," said M'Ion, "be you assured of that; and it is situated in Edinburgh.—Don't you know that we all live in Edinburgh now? See, there is the Castle, and yonder are the Pentland Hills. —We are seated in the most interesting spot in all the neighbourhood of Edinburgh."

"But Edinburgh!" exclaimed she—"when or how did we *come* to Edinburgh? If I have been brought to Edinburgh, I have been brought in my sleep, which surely is impossible! Diarmid!—father!—tell me when we came to this place!"

Daniel could not for his life tell what he should say, so he hung his head on one side, and put on a calculating face.—"Humph!" said Daniel—"it's a gay while now, I dare say."

Having nothing from this answer, she fixed her eyes on her husband, and waited

his reply. He answered, jocularly and carelessly, "Do you not remember of our coming to Edinburgh, love?—Sure you must?—But perhaps not—You were in a sickly and drowsy state, and the whole journey may be as a blank or a dream to you."

"No," said she, thoughtfully, "I think I have some faint recollections of every day, and among these, one of being carried into this house, which I thought had been a dream; but I remember of nothing farther, though I can reckon every day since Sunday eight-days,—the one which should have been the day of my death, had the hand of God not been withheld, whether in mercy or in anger, time only can disclose. But I felt then as it were the last throes of existence, and as if my soul had been separated from my body, and in it at the same time. At length I thought it made its escape, or that I made my escape, and wandered away darkling among strange people, of different languages. That must have been a dream, but it went on as if it had been for ages, till at the last I found myself compelled to

come back to my old habitation; but I have not even a dream of our journey hither."

"You must think over it again," said M'Ion; "it will come to your recollection by degrees; and if it should not, it is no matter. You see you are here—restored to health, to beauty, and to love—and have all your friends about you. What would you have more?"

They led her into the drawing-room, where every thing was superb to a degree she had never before even witnessed; they seated her on a Grecian couch, from which she looked around her, in silent wonder, at the grandeur of her new abode. But it proved a new source of consternation to her—and no wonder—when she thought to herself, "When was this grand house bought, or when furnished, that I should have known nothing about it?—all in so few days too! Was it not a curious amusement of my husband's to be buying and furnishing a house like a palace, during the very time that his new-made wife was lying at the

'point of death?" Her mind got quite bewildered, and several times she believed it to be all a vision, it was so like one of the tales of the Arabian Nights. When she awakened in a morning, very little would have made her a proselyte to the belief of enchantment, and the influence of the fairies in weaving the web of her fate. Nevertheless she felt happy, and a good deal delighted with every thing; for her nervous disorder being quite removed, she viewed all nature in a modified light. She was still devoutly religious, without being half crazed about it, and loved her husband as dearly, without loving to distraction. She became convinced that something had happened to her that could not be told, else it would have been communicated to her; and she therefore resolved to keep a watchful eye and an attentive ear, and gain by her own ingenuity what was denied her in confidence. When she looked at the alteration in the features of her parents, and the apparent improvement in the manly form of M'Ion, she would ween at times that she had died

and risen again. These were but fleeting vagaries, that could not bear reason; but that she had been carried off by the fairies for a few years, and won again from them, appeared to her occasionally the least objectionable supposition that she could form.

One day, while in the midst of these pleasing and wild illusions, she and Mrs Johnson were sitting together at a window in the drawing-room, and, though a day in November, it was a fine day, bright and warm; so the two sat in the sun, conversing about many things. Gatty, chancing to lean forward on the window, beheld, immediately below her eye, two children, gorgeously dressed in the Highland garb, with bonnets and plumes, kilts, trowsers, &c. They were playing at foot-ball in her own bleaching-green, and from the moment that her eye caught a glance of them, her whole attention was riveted to the tiny elves. Mrs Johnson was all in the fidgets, looking one time at the boys, and another time at her daughter-in-law, anxious to catch every look and every motion of each of them.

"Look at the dear little lambs, Mrs Johnson!—why won't you look?—you never saw any thing like it! See! they don't play against each other, but always the same way, and their great ambition is, who to get most kicks. Well, that is delightful!—They are so like two fairies!—I never saw aught in my life so beautiful! Why don't you look, Mrs Johnson?"

"So I do—I do look, my dear. Think you there is nothing worth looking at here but the play of children?"

"I declare you are always looking at me!—What have you to see here, while such a delightful scene is exhibiting below the window? Look at the lesser boy, Mrs Johnson, how pretty he is!—and dressed in the tartans of my husband's clan too!—Is he of the same?"

"[redacted] and not far from the head of it nei[redacted]id Mrs Johnson; and at that moment Daniel and M'Ion entered the room from their morning's walk. Gatty turned round, and called to them, with a degree of lively interest which M'Ion had never wit-

nessed in her from the time she had become his wife, "O Diarmid, come hither!—Here is such a sight as you have not seen in your walk!—Dear father, look at this!"

They both rushed to the window, but could see nothing.

"Is it yon towering cloud, like a range of Highland hills, that you mean?" said M'Ion.

"Is it that drove o' mug sheep?" said Daniel—"They're gayan weel heckit beasts, gaun rockie-rowin wi' their cock lugs. But I hae seen an otherwise sight than that."

"Ah, hear to them!" exclaimed Gatty; and looking in her husband's face archly, she added, imitating his tone, "A white cloud, like a range of Highland hills!—A drove of mug sheep!" (looking at Daniel)—"Heard ever any person such barbarians? See you nothing below your eye better worth looking at than towering clouds and mug sheep?"

"Oh! the children at their play, is it?" said M'Ion; "we see that so frequently we pay no attention to it."

"Is't the bairns ye mean?" said Daniel —"Ay, that is a sight worth the while to some o' us!"

Mrs Johnson touched him on the leg with her foot, to restrain him from going farther, for Daniel's eyes were beginning to goggle with delight.

"I never saw a more lovely animated little fellow than that clansman of ours!—See how he waddles at the ball!" cried Gatty, in raptures. "Dear Mrs Johnson, pray go and fetch him up to me, that I may look at him, and take him on my knee!—I long to kiss him, and hear him speak."

"If you will but listen where you are," said M'Ion, "you shall soon hear him speak enough.—He is an impertinent little teazing brat, I warrant. Better let him stay at his play, for haply you may get enough of him, as I intend by and by to request of you to adopt him as your son."

Gatty looked in his face and smiled,—as much as to say, It's surely time enough to think of that. Daniel coughed, and fidgeted, and turned up the one cheek; but then his

laugh went backward,—that is, in the contrary direction of other people's; for whereas other laughers give free vent to their breath in a loud ha-ha-ha! or a more suppressed he-he-he! Daniel drew his laugh inward, making a sound something like hick-kick-kick! at long intervals; and ever and anon he drew the bow of his elbow across his eyes. "Ye canna do't—ower soon," said Daniel,—"for it's a vera—good—bairn—I never saw a better—callant sin' I was born o' my mither!"

"Dear father, what do *you* know about the child?" said Gatty, with evident surprise.

All their eyes glanced to Daniel, as with cautionary hints. "O, no very muckle," said Daniel; "but ony body may see he's a prime bairn—He gangs as tight on his shanks as he war o' the true Coolly breed."—Daniel was driven to this reply, not knowing what to say to get clear off.

As they were chatting thus, little Colin and Robert Forbes continued their tiny game. Forbes was taller, but not so stout

and well set as Colin, and the latter got the greater part of the kicks at the ball. As they ran on, Colin keeping foremost, Robert Forbes gave him a push on the neck, with intent to make him run by the ball, but in place of that, it made him fall on his face on the gravel walk. Gatty uttered a suppressed shriek, and was in the act of throwing up the window to reprove Robert. But M'Ion held it down, saying, "Stop, stop! take no notice, love, till we see whether or not the urchin resents this insult." He well knew that he would; and accordingly Colin rose in a moment, wiped the gravel from his hands on his philabeg, and without saying a word, struck Forbes on the face. The latter, conscious that he was the aggressor, tried to hold his assailant off; but Colin both kicked with his feet, and laid on with his open hands, till the other fled. As Colin fought, too, he threatened thus:—"Wat you 'bout, Yobbit Fobby? Me lain you nock down young chief!"

"What does the fairy say?" said Gatty.

Colin then, pursuing him round the walk, overtook him, and pushed him over in his turn. Forbes cried; on which M'Ion, fearing he was hurt, threw up the window, and reproved Colin.—"For shame, Colin!" cried he—"How dare you hurt poor Robert?"

Colin looked abashed, took Forbes by the hand to help him up, and said, "Haud tongue, Yobbit—Colin vedy soddy—No doo't again, ittle Yobbit."

"God bless the dear little lamb!" exclaimed Gatty—"Did ever any living see such a sweet forgiving little cherub? Dear Diarmid, call him up, call him up!"

"Come in instantly, and speak to me, sirrah!" cried M'Ion.

"Ise and go wit me, Yobbit Fobby," said Colin, hanging his lip; "see, papa vedy angy."

"What does he say?" said Gatty, hardly able to breathe—"Papa?"

No one answered a word, but all looked at one another. M'Ion blushed like crimson.—He had no reason to blush; but he

did so from an apprehension of what his wife might be thinking at the time; for he saw there was but one natural way in which she could interpret this exposure made by the inadvertent boy, and yet he had not heart to give a true explanation.

The child, as he had been ordered, came up stairs as he could win, which was not very fast, leading Forbes by the hand. He called at the door several times for admission; his father and grandmother hesitated, but Daniel could stand the child's modest request no longer, as he came on command, so he rose and let him in. Colin went straight up to M'Ion at the window, leading Forbes by the hand.—"No be angy at poo Colin, papa—ittle Yobbit no hut, and Colin vedy soddy."

Gatty never so much as opened her mouth, nor did she caress the boy, although he came to her very knee, and gave two or three wistful looks in her face. She gave M'Ion a momentary glance, but withdrew her eyes again instantaneously. Daniel was sniffing, as if labouring under the night-

mare, and Mrs Johnson's eloquence consisted all in looks, but these were expressive of the deepest interest. M'Ion gave each of the boys sixpence to buy toys, and desired Colin to kiss Robert, and shake hands with him, which he did; and then Mrs Johnson led them out. As they went, Colin kept looking behind him, and said, "Who 'at bonny lady, gand-mamma? She be angy at Colin too. No peak one wod to poo Colin."

Gatty's ear caught the appellation grandmamma at once, and all doubts that the boy was her husband's son vanished from her fancy. Strange unbalanced ideas, at war with one another, began to haunt her teeming imagination; and, in the mean time, her complexion changed from ruddy to pale, and from pale again to red successively. She thought the mystery of the grand house, of which she had never heard before, was now about to be explained; and that it had been furnished with such splendour to be the residence of some favourite mistress. But then how did this sort with her husband's character and principles?

And how came her father and mother, and all, to be living in that house, without taking any offence? How fain would she have put the question, "Who in the world is this boy?" but she had not the face to do it; and so the conversation stood still. It stood long still; and Daniel was the first who endeavoured to set it once more agoing, with what effect the reader will judge.

"Why, daughter, ye hae neither taen the little dear bairn on your knee, nor kissed him, after a' the fraze ye made. That's unco stepmother-like wark, an' I dinna like to see't. There never was a finer callant i' this yirth, an' the sooner ye acknowledge him the better, for ye hae it aye to do."

Gatty looked at her apron, and picked some small diminutive ends of threads from it, and M'Ion cleared the haze from a pane of the window, and looked out. He found that it was a subject, the management of which required a delicacy that he was not master of. He could not shock the sensibility of his dear wife, so lately and so wonderfully rescued from the most dreadful of

all temporal calamities, by telling her at once, that she had lain three years in a state of utter unconsciousness; and he was just thinking to himself, whether he had not better suffer her to remain in her present state of uncertainty, regarding the latitude of his own morality, than come out with the naked truth, when he was released from his dilemma by an incident that threatened to plunge him still into a deeper one.

A young gentleman entered the room, with his plumed bonnet in his hand; and this gallant was no other than little Colin M'Ion-vich-Diarmid again, who came straight up to his mother's knee; and, kneeling down, he held up his rosy chubby face toward hers, and lisped out the following words:—"Poo Colin come back to beg a kiss fom his own dea mamma."

Gatty's heart clove to the child; it yearned over him, so that she could resist the infantine request no longer. She burst into a flood of tears, pressed the boy to her bosom, kissed him, and pressed her moist burning cheek to his; then again held him

from her to gaze on him. Daniel went to a corner of the room, in which he fixed his elbow firm, and leaned his brow upon his arm. Colin, who was as sharp as a brier, and had been getting his lesson from Mrs Johnson in another apartment, now added, "But Colin beg you blessing too, fo you his own mamma."

"Yes, may the God of Heaven shower his blessings on your guiltless head, lovely boy!" said she, emphatically. "And though I am not so happy as to be your mamma——"

"But I say you are!" shouted Daniel, as he advanced from his corner, holding his face and both his hands straight upward, and at every step lifting his foot as high as the other knee. "You are his mother, dame; an' I winna hear ye deny your ain flesh an' blood ony langer. I canna do it, whatever the upshot may be. O, bless ye baith!—Bless ye! bless ye! bless ye!" and Daniel kneeled on the floor, folding the mother and son in his arms. "I tell you

ye *are* his mother, Gatty, as sure as my wife was yours."

Mrs Johnson hearing the noise that Daniel made, came in; and on her Gatty fixed her bewildered eyes for an explanation. "My father raves," said she; and man never witnessed such a countenance of pale amazement.

"He tells you nothing but the truth, my dear," said Mrs Johnson—"he tells you nothing but the truth. Your life, as you truly said the other day, has been a mystery to yourself; it has been a mystery hid with God. But be assured that is your son—the son of your own body; for I was present at his birth, and have nursed him on my knee, and in my bosom, since that hour. May he be a blessing and a stay to you, my dear daughter; for he is indeed your own child!"

Gatty was paralysed with a confusion of perplexed ideas; but she involuntarily clasped the child to her bosom; and, in the mean while, Daniel had his arms round them both.

Matters were now like to be carried too far for Colin, who, though the beginner of the fray, began to dislike it exceedingly; and kicking furiously, he made his escape, saying, as he fled across the room, "Colin not know 'bout tis."

Daniel could not contain himself; he wept for joy, and absolutely raved, till Mrs Bell entering the room from looking after the household affairs, rebuked him; but he snapped his fingers at her, and said, "He cared not a fig if he died the morn."

Some explanation was now absolutely necessary to poor bewildered Gatty. She sought it herself; and it was communicated to her in a way as gentle and soothing as possible. "It is hard for me to believe that you have all entered into a combination to mock me," said she; "yet how can it be otherwise? If that boy is mine, he must have been born and grown up in a night. Did you not say to me, that this was the 9th of November?"

"Yes, I did, my love," said M'Ion; "and I say so still. But you never in-

quired at me what year of our redemption it was."

With that he lifted the Almanack from the drawing-room table, and held the title-page of it before her eyes. Wonders crowded too close on one another. Her apprehension could not fathom them; and she shrunk from the dreadful review. It was pitiful to behold her beautiful form and features drawn up as she would have crept within herself, or into the bowels of the earth, to shield her from the hideous retrospect.

To divert her farther by something more pleasant, M'Ion lifted a volume of the Scots Magazine, and said, "Since I have shewn you good letter-press, as proof in part of what you seem disposed to doubt, I will here produce you another of the same nature." And, turning to the register of births, he pointed one out to her, which he desired her to read. She could not, but looked on while he read aloud, "On the 17th instant, the lady of Diarmid M'Ion, now Lord M——, of a son and heir." "Do

you now believe that little Colin is your own son?"

"I know not what to believe, or what to doubt," cried she wildly. "Where have I been? or rather, *what* have I been? Have I been in a sleep for three years and a day? Have I been in the grave? Or in a mad-house? Or in the land of spirits? Or have I been lying in a state of total insensibility, dead to all the issues of life? What sins may I not have committed during three years of total oblivion?"

"Calm your heart; and be all your apprehensions allayed, my dearest love," said M'Ion, interrupting her; "for, guiltless as your whole life has been, the latter part has been the most guiltless of any. It is needless to dissemble. On the hour that you had predicted to be your last, your soul took its departure, to all human appearance. After a while, the body revived, in the same way as a vegetable revives, but the spirit was wanting; and in that state of healthful and moveless lethargy, have you remain-

ed for the long space of three years, unknowing and unknown. At the third return of that momentous day, and on the very hour, the living ray of the divinity returned to enlighten a frame renovated in health, and mellowed to ripeness in all its natural functions, which before were overheated and irrestrainable. I speak in the simplicity of nature, and relate circumstances as they appeared to our eyes; but into the mysterious workings of the Governor of Nature, I dare not dive."

"Ay, the very weest turning o' his hand is far aboon a' our comprehensions," said Daniel. "But I hae learned this: That it's wrang in fo'k to be ower misleared and importunate in their requests to their Maker. An' that it's best to be thankfu' an' gratefu' for what we receive; an' gie him just his ain way o' things. He's no likely to gang far wrang. An' gin he were, it's no us crying a', ane for ae thing, an' ane for another, that's likely to pit him right again."

If ever there was a woman redeemed from the gates of death to be a blessing to the human race, it has been Agatha Bell. Her life has been modelled after his who could not err: it has been spent in doing good. Her angel face has carried comfort and joy with it wherever it has appeared; and while she has been the delight of society, both in a social and domestic capacity, she has been eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, the instructress of young persons in the ways of truth and godliness, and the comforter of the broken-hearted, and those bowed down to meet the grave. Who can doubt that the Almighty will continue to bless such a benign creature to the end, and her progeny after her?

CIRCLE VIII.

I SHALL now conclude this tale with transcripts of two or three letters; which, though dated some years previous to the time when the incidents last narrated took place, are, nevertheless, necessary toward the clearing up of a former part of this relation, as well as the proving of my theory, that, YOUTHFUL LOVE IS THE FIRST AND GREATEST PERIL OF WOMAN.

I am sorry to be obliged to wind up my tale with these letters; but it is with domestic histories, as with all other affairs of life.—Certain individuals wind themselves into the tissue of every one of them,

without whom the tale would be more pure, and the web of life more smooth and equal; but neither of them so diversified or characteristic. We must therefore be content still to take human life as it is, with all its loveliness, folly, and incongruity.

LETTER I.

"BURLHOPE, January 8.

"DEAR COUSIN JOE,

"THIS comes to let you know things that would be better unknown; but being as they are, they must be known so far; and therefore to your friendly breast do I commit them.

"You were present at all my splores in Edinburgh, and know how badly some of them turned out; but you were also present at one which we had good reason to hope would prove some amends for the losses of the others. I do not say that it will not; or that, on the whole, it is sure to turn out

a bad venture; far be it from me to say that; therefore, when you are over your glass, don't you go to be smirking and whispering about to your neighbours, that your cousin Dick has done so and so, or said so and so, or that he is rued of his wife; for, if you do, I won't quarrel with you, but I'll scart the first man's buttons that dares say so in my hearing. If I *had* repented of what I have done, it is no man's business; and I wouldn't suffer any of them to say it; and I beg, cousin Joe, that if ever you hear of Simey Dodd, or any other body saying so, you will tell me plainly—no mumping, or mowing, or saying things by halves—and I'll settle it with them!

"But I must come to the point. You know you were my best man, and saw me married to a lady, whom both you and I thought a treasure at that time—not that I do not think so still; I beg you to keep that in view—but, in short, I was married—I need not deny that to you, if I were even disposed to deny it, which is not the

case; and if Simey Dodd say that I deny my marriage, he had better hold his tongue.

"Well, you know I had every reason to suppose that my wife loved me; and I am sure so she did; for she has a kind affectionate heart, and is very much disposed to the tender passion. I do not impute this to her as a fault—far from it—but certainly there is a great deal of danger in it. However, a woman cannot help that, you know; if she is made for love, she must love; and if evil befal her on that account, why, it is the more pity; that is all that can be said. However, I must come to the point, if I can; but the truth is, that I find my heart so full of the point, that, rabbit me, if I can get an inch nearer to it! But thus far is certain, that she who is now called Mrs Rickleton—my wife, I mean—was very much disposed to the tender and delicate passion of love; and I liked her the better for it;—and why should I not still? I don't see why I should not. Although, in this case, it must be confessed that it has been

productive of some consequences that could have been dispensed with; and has deprived me of a prerogative to which I consider myself as having been entitled. But this is a point of law; and as you have been studying that clear and intricate profession, I want to consult you about it. It is this: Whether or not a man is entitled to be the father of his own child? I think he is; but I am told, that in law he is not. Now, I think it a great pity that such a clear infallible thing as the law should take up this threep, and maintain it; for, let the law say what it will, I say this, that it is but fair and reasonable that every man—especially a man who has an estate to heir, and leases on lands that extend to seventeen thousand acres, which are heritable property—*ought* to be entitled to be the father of his own child. This is what I want particularly to be resolved in, before I proceed any further. I will now give you the history of the whole matter, which

will enable you to lead a proof in your own mind.

"When my wife was very young and very beautiful, long before the fortune was left to her, she was courted by a young lawyer, a gentleman of good connexions and high respectability. Well, this gentleman courts and courts at the young simple creature, until he gains her heart so entirely, that she would have done any thing for him ever he liked. If he had bidden her go into the sea and drown herself, she could not have refused him, she loved him so perfectly and so exclusively. But it so happened, that just when their love was at the very height, she got wor done day that he was married to another, which made her very ill, and she took to her bed, poor woman, and was like to die, —and no great wonder. He found means, however, to come back and make his peace with her, by what means I do not know. And there I think she was wrong, for I would have seen him hanged as soon; but when love is in, wit is out,—make his peace

he did, and she continued to love him as well as ever, if not better. I can bring proof if I like, which I do not intend to do, that for every day and night that they were together before his marriage, they were two afterwards, and this I account a most horrid thing in a lawyer. I do not know of a man living who so well deserves to have his buttons scarted as this. But more of this subject hereafter. You may be sure that I could find in my heart to maul him, and kick him, and trail him through gutters by the feet. Well, perhaps the day will come yet; but I must come to the point.

"So you see, cousin Joe, they two continued to love and love on, and what not; until at length she got her legacy, which, with her beauty, might have made her a match for the best lawyer, or the best gentleman in the country. But the poor thing was so infatuated, and so overcome with love, that she continued entirely devoted to this married lawyer. The devil confound him for a lawyer! say I. He ought to be turned out of society. What think you he did?—No

more honourable trick than to wheedle a good deal of her money from her, which she bestowed with perfect good will, and lavished presents on him foreby. I never knew anything in the world in the least like it! There is no living can tell what a woman will do, or what she will not do, when she is in love with a man, and comes to be tried by her actions towards him. Really, the women ought to be pitied! for whenever any of them falls in love, her peril is not to be told. She is exactly like a very bonny ane, whom I saw dancing on a wire at Edinburgh, a fearsome way from the ground.—When she had accomplished all that she intended, and gained her full aim, she had accomplished but very little, and gained a very poor prize; but, in the meantime, she ran the risk of getting a devil of a fall. Now, bless my heart, cousin Joe, what prize could any woman promise herself by continuing in love with a married lawyer? Any thing in the world but that! I think if I were a woman, a lawyer is not the sort of man I would fall in love with,

at any rate. He would be too formal and cold a creature for me, with his clauses and his contracts; his farthers and his foresaids; his procutors and his interlocutors. But a married lawyer! Good lord, I would as soon fall in love with the shaft of an old dry water-pump, or a man of snow, with an icicle pipe in his teeth. I believe a woman that is in love is as mad as if she were bitten by a mad dog, and if that is the case, she ought to be excused, for no mad body is accountable for his or her actions; but I shall turn a lawyer myself if I go on at this rate, although you see I am carrying on to a point.

"This species of love continued until I at last appeared on the lists to contend the prize with the lawyer, after which, of course, his chance was over. But it is a fact, that she had before that above thirty suitors, all unmarried men, though rather needy of money some of them, yet not to one of them would she lend an ear, for the sake of this confounded brief of a lawyer. She made

no objections to me; indeed she rather pushed the matter harder than was like to suit me at the time; but I loved the girl, and took her, principally because she loved me so well, and gave me the preference to all her other lovers. I would have given a thousand pound, cousin, if Simey Dodd had courted her. But that's over.

" We had not been married a month, till my wife begins to cry and whine, and shed tears. And then we conversed about the matter; and I shall give you our conversation in our own words; for as I consult you as a lawyer, and have got our master of the academy to write out this epistle for me, I have told him that he must give it in our own words, spelling and all. ' How can I do that,' says he, ' when I hear but one of the parties ?'

" ' Then write it and spell it as that one delivers it to you,' says I, ' and be cworsed to thee for a dwomonie, although thou calls thyself measter of the academy !' And now, cousin, I am looking over his shoulder, and you shall have one or two of our conversa-

tions, word for word, if thou canst make anything out of them."

["Be it known to the learned gentleman to whom this is directed, that I am not accountable for the grammar or orthography of what follows.

"ABRAM TELL, M. A. C."]

"'Whoy Keatie, mi loove, how is it that I find thee puling and boobling and snorking this geate, when I expects smoils and loove tokens. What the deuce is the meatter wo' thee? Hast thou no a house of thee own, and moe servants than thou canst coont? Hast thou no beef and mwotton, shooger and tey? room and brandy? a fether-bed and a keynd hoosband? and, rabbit it, what wod'st thou hae?'

"'Oh Richard! my dear Richard!' said she, 'I am afraid I have used you very ill.'

"'Whoten way?' says I.

"'Oh, in marrying you,' says she.

"'Mearrying me?' says I. 'Rabbit

it, how can that be? That was no blame of yours, when I axed thee.'

"'Oh, but then I am quite unworthy of you,' said she.

"'Whoy thou mwost leave me to joodge that meatter, Keatie, mi loove,' says I. 'That's nwot a thing that cwomes oonder thy concern.'

"'Indeed, indeed, but I am,' says she, 'I am quite unworthy of you.'

"'Whoten way?' says I.

"'Because I'm afraid I have been guilty of a pa-pa,' said she.

"Now I beg of you to take note of this confession, cousin, seeing that this lawyer of hers is a married man. She said she had been guilty of a *papa*, or paw-paw, as she said it, which comes to the same thing."

["Perhaps my friend and patron, Mr Rickleton, heard wrong here;—perhaps the lady said a faux-paux.

"A. Tell, M. A. C."]

"This note of the dwomonie's is downright stwoff, cousin. He won't be forbidden

putting in his notes. But there was no facks-packs in the matter. She said she had been guilty of a papa.

"I did not understand this very well, so I said nothing; but as is soomhow natural for a man that has an estate, I deed'nt leyke to hear that there was any oother papa in the boosiness but myself; so I boott my lip and knotted my brows, and looked as if I had been conseedering the point.

" 'Now, there it is,' says she, crying; 'I thought I might throw myself on your mercy, as seeing that love has been the cause of all my misfortunes; but I see you are angry with me, and are going to throw me off. I thought I could have trusted any thing to the kindness of your heart.'

" 'And so thou may'st,' says I; 'I have a heart to forget and forgive, as well as any in all Northoomberland, and that thou shalt find. But there are some things that a man can forgive, and some things that he cannot forgive. Tell me the whole matter, and thou shalt not have cause to rue. Who is he, the papa?'

" ' So then you have discovered my case, and know all about the matter?' said she.

" ' Nwo; the devil take me if I have, or if I dwo,' says I; 'nwor perhaps never would if thou had'st holden the tongue of thee.'

[She then appeared to hesitate a good while, and looked very timorous and wistful, as if the sun of truth dreaded to peep from behind the dark cloud of moral turpitude that overshadowed it.*]

" ' You may possibly have heard,' says she, ' that it was my mishap to fall deeply in love with a young gentleman of the law, who paid his addresses to me long before I saw you? O, he was such an accomplished dear man, that I could not but love him! But woe's my heart! It grieves me to say that he has used me ill,—most villanously has he used me!'

" ' Has he?' says I. ' You have said enough! I'll try how the dog's stomach digests gun bullets. If one of them wiggy lwords who keep the lawyers to their due

* " My inditing.' A. T."

boonds, had ill used wooman of my connection, I would chop him into board's meat, mooch more one of them gabbling crew —cworse them! I'se Richard Rickleton, of Burlhope, Esquire,' says I, 'and where's the man that *dares* to wrong me, or wooman either?' I meant to have said, 'the man that dares to wrong me or *my* wooman either,' and wondered when she took fright, and went away crying and swobbing, and took to her bed. And so ended our first conference on the subject.

"Nwot long thereafter she says to me, 'Richard, my dear,' says she, 'I's not that very well, and always turning worse. I want, with your permission, to go to Edinburgh, to my mother's house, for a little while, to be near some skill.'

"'Thou shalt have all the skill that the coontry affords at home,' says I. 'Thou should be free to go to Edinburgh, and to stay or come as thou likest, were it nwot for that cwonfounded lawyer. But I won't troost my dear wife so far from me, beside one

that she avowedly loves. No matter how ill he has used her. The worse usage the greater danger.'

"'I said so, cousin Joe, and the upshot has proved that I was so far right. 'But I'll let thee go on this condition,' says I, 'if thou'lt swear to me that thou art nwot to see that lawyer's face.' She moombled and moombled, and knowed nwot what to say. 'Oho!' says I, 'have I found out what thou's going for?'

"'Alas, no!' says she. 'You know that I love you too well to harbour any purpose of dishonouring you farther. I have dishonoured you enough already.'

"'Whoten way?' says I.

"'Ah, you know what way!' said she. 'Or if you do not, you will soon know. Therefore, I pray, as you love me, let me go to Edinburgh for a short time, and, at all events, I promise to you on my most sacred oath, not to see my former lover, nor hear him speak, save in presence of my mother.'

"I put my hands below my arms and

winked with both eyes, for I was stoodying very deep. I doodn't know how far I might troost an ould wife when I heard the term —*former loover*—mentioned. 'Rabbit these ould hags!' says I to myself, 'there's no saying what they will allow, or what they will disallow.'

"'I am sure I would do ten times more for you, Richard,' says she, 'even though your life did not depend on it, as mine does. It is true, I have given up my liberty into your hands, and with it all that I had to give, assured that you would never make a bad use of aught I had committed to you.'

"'And neither I will, Keatie,' says I. 'Thou hast conquered. I'll ride with thee myself the mworn all the way to Felton, and see thee into the cwoach; and thou shalt stay with thy mwother as long as thou leykes. Only, thou's to let me hear from thee once a week.'

"That was our second conference, and now our dwomonie shall word the rest.

"Many a morning dawned in the eastern heaven, yea many a sun rose brilliant from

the ocean that circumvolves our island, and mounted the highest peaks of the blue Cheviots, and still found me lying on my lonely and sleepless pillow." ["My patron compels me to put down, that the above elegant sentence is d—d nonsense. A. T."]

"Many were the kind letters that passed between us, but not a word of the lawyer, though mine to her bore some inquiries anent the man. Her health continued bad, she said, and that her doctor had given it as his decided opinion that she should follow a regiment" ["Perhaps the word was regimen. A. T."]—"for some time! Cousin, cannot tell you how my hair bristled, and how my blood boiled when I read this prescription. 'What,' said I to myself, 'the beautiful and accomplished Mrs Rickleton —My wife—The wife of Richard Rickleton of Burlhope, Esquire, who is a trustee on the turnpikes, a freeholder of the county, and lessee of 17,000 acres of land! Shall his lady go and follow a regiment of common soldiers?—A horde of rude, vulgar, and beastly dogs?—No! sooner shall manhood

give place to depravity—sooner shall my denomination be changed, and my right hand lose its strength! I'll annihilate the base doctor and his prescription together, or may the name of Rickleton perish from the dales of Northumberland!'

"It was six weeks subsequent to her departure that I received this letter, and just about that time I had begun to press her return with much sedulity. But without losing another day I mounted my horse and rode straight to Edinburgh, to prevent, if possible, the disgraceful catastrophe; and all the way my heart burned at the doctor, at the regiment, and at my spouse herself. 'She ought to have staid at home,' thought I, 'and I told her so, which might have prevented this dreadful alternative. And what if she is gone off before I can reach town? How then shall I deport myself? I'll first be revenged on the doctor,' thought I, 'that's certain; for a gentleman in all his prescriptions should keep decency and propriety in view. And then I'll go into the midst of the regiment, and if any of the

officers have but mentioned love to my wife, I'll challenge and fight such of them one by one; if any of the common soldiers have so much as rubbed elbows with her, I'll beat them like dogs from the one end of the regiment to the other.'

"I did not need to put these high resolves into execution; but riding straight to town, I put up my horse at the inn nearest my mother-in-law's house, and ran thither as fast as I was able. The servant came to the door at my rap, and I said, 'Well, girl, how are all the people here today?'

"'Quite well, thank you, sir. Are you the other doctor?'

"'The other doctor? Are you blind? Are you dreaming? Is that all that I have for all the half-crown pieces I have given you? Is my wife here, or is she gone off with the soldiers?'

"'Your wife, sir? Oh, I beg your pardon, sir! Your lady is here, sir.'

"'And pray how is her health now?'

"'Middling, sir, middling. You had better call again, sir.'

"'Call again? What do you mean by that? Call again on my own wife? A pretty hint indeed. May not I see my own lady anywhere, or in any condition? In bed or out of bed? Sick or whole? You shrimp! You mussel! May not I see my own wife?'

"'It is not convenient for the family at present, sir. Be so good as call again some other time. You can't go up stairs just now, sir. I won't suffer it.'

"This opposition only roused my resolution to proceed. 'Perhaps her lawyer may be there,' thought I, 'her former lover; or, perhaps, an officer of dragoons. I'll see for once, however.—Can't go up?' says I. *You* won't suffer it? And pray who are you? Can a rabbit or a mouse prevent the lion from entering his own den when his mate lies at the end of it? Go, you foumart, you weazel, you—and chirk at the door to keep back vermin like yourself!' So saying, I turned her round by the nape

of the neck gently, and rushed up stairs towards my wife's room. Ere I was half way up, a gentleman opened her door from the inside, to rebuke the maid and turn me back. But when he saw me his jaws fell down on his breast with terror, and he staggered back into the room, speechless and trembling. When I entered I beheld another little swarthy gentleman stooping forward on my wife's bed, while her mother stood beside him; and another plain-looking woman sat behind. 'I have catched the whole bevy of them about her,' thought I. 'And now will I sift them to the very souls.' So, as soon as I entered, without opening my mouth, I closed the door, and set my back to it; but finding the key inside, I turned it, took it out, and put it into my pocket. Then striding straight up to the bed, all the rest gave place and stood back aghast, save the little swarthy gentleman with the spectacles, whom I soon found out to be the self-same doctor against whom I had conceived such a mortal spirit of revenge. Not knowing who I was, he faced

me up. 'Pray sir,' said he, 'what express business has procured us the honour of your call at such an unseasonable period?'

"'Are you the doctor?' says I. 'Sir, are you the doctor that has been prescribing for my wife of late?'

"'Your wife, sir?' said he, bowing politely and offering me his hand, which I could not resist taking. 'O, Mr Rickleton! I beg ten thousand pardons! I have, indeed, had the honour of prescribing for your wife, sir, of late, and I hope to render you a good and a full *account* thereof more ways than one.'

"'You are a pleasant gentleman, and I like your manner well,' said I; 'but there is one matter for which I will make you answerable.'—The regiment was in my head; at the very root of my tongue; and I was beginning to extend my voice, when all at once my attention was arrested by hearing my wife sobbing bitterly in the bed. This marred my speech; and, turning my face suddenly round and poking my nose fairly into the bed, out of anxiety and fondness

for her that was in it, there I beheld—O cousin Joe, you can never guess what I beheld!—no, not if you were going to ransack your mind for all the greatest improbabilities that it was possible the world might produce. If I had not the master of the academy to write for me, and put my feelings on paper, I never could. I could not even tell you what I saw, far less what I felt on that trying occasion. As sure as the right hand is on me, cousin, there did I behold my loved, my adored wife, sitting with a very young babe at her bosom, and weeping over it! I thought I should have sunk through the floor with astonishment, and it was long before I could speak another word. She was sitting up with some clothes around her, and held the child, which was a fine boy, on her two arms; and, in the mean time, she was rocking it backwards and forwards with short swings, looking stedfastly and affectionately in its face, without lifting her eyes to me or to any other object, and the baby's face and breast was all

bathed with her tears. How fain would I have clasped them both to my bosom and wept too!—But honour,—stern and magnificent honour interposed, and I was obliged, against my inclination, to assume a deportment of proud offence. 'How's this, my dear?' says I. 'It's to be hoped that same baby is not yours?'

"She kept rocking the child as formerly, and weeping over it still more bitterly; but she neither lifted her eyes nor moved her tongue in answer to my question. My heart was like to melt; so I saw there was a necessity for rousing myself into a rage in order to preserve any little scrap of honour and dignity that remained to me. Accordingly, I turned to the doctor; and, tramping my foot violently on the floor, I said, 'There's for it now, sir! There's for it! That comes all of your d—d prescriptions!'

"'My prescriptions, Mr Rickleton?' said he good-humouredly. 'That boy came in consequence of my prescriptions, did you say? I beg you will consider, that

I never in my life prescribed for your lady till within these two weeks.'

" When I heard that, it struck me that the regiment business could hardly be made accountable for this sore calamity, and that I must necessarily look elsewhere for some one whereon to vent my just vengeance. The greatest misfortune now befel me that ever happened to me in my whole life, and I regret it more than all the rest of my mishaps together. It was this.—I did not then know that my wife's lover was a married man. I had never heard, nor ever once suspected, such a thing. But I *did* suspect that the poor craven that stood gaping and trembling up in the corner might be my wife's *former lover*, as she called him, for he was a little very spruce-looking handsome fellow, if he had not been in such a panic. So I strode up to him, and heaving my fist above his head, I vociferated into his ear. ' I believe, sir, *you* are the man to whom I must look for an explanation of this affair?'

" ' Mhoai, me, sir?' said he, rather flippantly, though in a sad taking. ' Mhoai, as

far as relates to what is law, sir—mhoai, perhaps I may!'

"'You then *are* a lawyer, sir?' said I, secure of my game.

"'Mhoai, yes, sir, and a married gentleman like yourself,' said he, 'with a family of my own, and perfectly well versed in every thing that relates to the hymeneal state.'

"'Married?' says I. 'Then I fear I have mistaken my man. I'm sorry for it. Had you been *he*, you should have paid the kane!'

"When I said so, I saw the doctor's face change from the darkest dread into a cheerful smile; and I'll never forget that smile, for I since have thought there was a sly sneer of derision in it. The lawyer's face cleared up likewise most wonderfully. My revenge not being able to find any vent there, I determined to make the most of my party that circumstances would permit. So stepping round again to the doctor, I says, 'Sir, I have the key in my pocket, and before you stir you shall tell me, on

your honour as a gentleman, if that boy is come to the full and proper time of his birth ?'

" The doctor hesitated; and do you know, cousin, so weak and foolish a heart had I, that I would have given a thousand pounds if he had said that the child was not.

" ' He is a fine child, sir,' said he.

" ' That is no answer to my question,' says I.

" ' Since you put it to me on mine honour, sir, I must say *I think he is*,' said he.

" My countenance fell; and I felt a weakness creeping all over my frame. ' Thank you, sir,' said I. ' And now, sir,' added I, turning to the spruce lawyer, ' can you resolve me whether that boy can possibly be mine or not? It is only a little better than three months since we were married.'

" The doctor shook his head; but both the old lady and the lawyer gave him such looks that he comprehended their meaning; but, woe be to my stupid head! I did not.

"'Mhoai, sir, I believe,' said the lawyer, 'that the child being born in lawful wedlock, is yours in the eye of the law.'

"'It strikes me that he has been forthcoming excessively soon,' says I.

"'Mhoai, sir—Mhoai, that very often happens with the first child,' said the lawyer. 'But it very rarely ever happens again; *Very* rarely, indeed. But, God bless you, sir! It is quite common with a woman's first child.'

"This gave me great comfort. So I opened the door and thanked the gentlemen for their courtesy; and they rushed out, the lawyer foremost and the doctor hard after him, the two women following slowly after all; and I then addressed myself to my wife, asking her many questions in the kindest and most affectionate manner. But she would not answer me one word—no, not one syllable, though I should have questioned her to this hour. She had not the heart to deceive me, I believe, poor woman; and, hearing what she had heard, she dared not confess anything. I was obliged to leave her and

go in search of her mother, but she was nowhere to be found; and with that I left the house to go in search of you, that I might lay my whole case open to you, trusting it to your clear head and ingenuous heart. As I was pushing on in a very confused state of mind, looking at the seams between the plainstones, and wondering that they had not some of them closer jointed, I never wist till I was touched on the arm as if by one who wanted to speak to me. I looked hastily about, and beheld a decent country-looking young woman, who smiled in my face as if she wished me to speak to her. I thought I knew the face, but not being able to find the woman's name, after looking her closely in the face, I turned from her and passed on. The next moment she laid hold of my arm again, on which I looked round a second time, and asked what she wanted.

"'I want to speak with you privately for a few minutes, sir,' said she, 'if your leisure suits, and if you will permit me.'

"'With all my heart, my woman,' says I. 'Shall we go into a change-house?'

"'O there's no occasion for that,' says she; 'only let us walk apart somewhere by ourselves, where we may not be seen; for it does not suit for the like of me to be seen talkin' intimately to a gentleman.'

"'I am not remarkably nice that way, my woman,' says I. 'But I shall go anywhere you please.'

"'Follow me, then,' says she. 'But follow at a little distance, lest we be observed. I am not certain but that we are both watched!'

"I did as she desired me, following her at a distance so far that I merely kept sight of her. She turned down a broad close or wynd, and then in at a dark entry, and finally, she led me in below a small arched way that leads under the end of the North Bridge into the Fish Market. 'Now!' says she, 'if anybody see us together here, we can at least discern who they are, and if they are looking after us. I see you do not know me, sir? But, not to keep

you in suspense, I was in the room with your lady when you entered, and left it but just now, and I watched you at a distance, that as you came out I might tell you something which I suspect you do not know.'

" ' I am very much obliged to you, my woman,' says I; ' very much indeed. I stand in need of some person to tell me the truth here, or tell me where it is to be found, for I can discover none of it save what is rolled up in a blanket.'

" ' You are the most simple gentleman that ever was born,' said she. ' When you came into the room, you appeared to me to be a man that would carry all the world before you, and I expected nothing less than that you were, at the very least, to knock the two fellows' heads together, and, perhaps, set fire to the house afterwards. But, in place of that, you are more simple than a child, and have not even the foresight of one.'

" ' You never were farther mistaken in your whole life, my woman,' says I. ' That is one of my mother's old fantastical rants,

and you have had it from her. But so far contrary is the fact, that it is quite well known there is not such a quick discerning fellow on the whole Border.'

"'You may be so in some things, but certainly not in others,' said she. 'How could it possibly enter your head that yon fine boy could be yours?'

"'Whoten way?' says I, very angrily; for that was a matter I did not like much to hear meddled with. The woman laughed at me. I declare she laughed till the tears came into her eyes.

"'Because I understand that you have been only a little more than three months married,' said she. 'Credit me, unless it is upwards of nine months since you first fell acquainted with your lady, yon child is not yours.'

"'You don't know that,' says I. 'There may be some exceptions. You heard what yon honest and enlightened gentleman said on the subject.'

"'It was what you honest gentleman said that provoked me more than any thing

I ever heard in my life,' said she; 'and it was that which tempted me to make this disclosure. Who do you think yon honest and enlightened gentleman is?—No other than the seducer of your lady, and the father of yon babe. Nay, you need not stagger and grasp the wind that way, nor clinch your teeth as if you would tear him all to pieces, for you have let the proper hour of punishment slip, and I am sorely mistaken if he ever trust himself as near your clutches again.'

"'You are imposing on me, dame,' cried I, madly. 'You are telling me falsehoods! Did you not hear him say he was a married man?'

"'For mercy's sake be quiet,' says she; 'else my information is at an end. Stay till I explain. I will make the matter as clear to you as the sun at noon. So he is a married man, and has been so these two or three years. Before that time, however, he courted your lady, who was young, a great beauty, but a fortuneless one; and with such assiduity did he pursue her, that he

seduced her affections, if not her person. He married another, which had nigh broken her heart; but shortly after that, her uncle in England dying, left her the fortune which made her richer than her false lover, his lady, and perhaps all his relations put together; for having gentle names, they had not much beside. The lawyer was now piqued to the heart at having lost so much good ready money, and so lovely a woman into the bargain. So what does he but introduce himself again to your lady, then an heiress, (for he must be a complete scoundrel,) and then he laments to her the necessity he had been under, in compliance with the advices of friends, of marrying another while his heart was wholly hers, and would remain hers, and hers alone, to the day of his death! To cut the matter short, he so gained upon her affections, that had been wholly devoted to him previously, that in a short time he had both her person and fortune at his command. It was little short of infatuation in her; but so strong and unalterable was her first love, that though her

suitors were numberless, she chose rather to live yon villain's mistress, than to become the wife of an honest man. She at length became sick of his behaviour and duplicity, and repented of what she had done when it was too late, resolving to leave him, and in the duties of honest wedlock forget his treachery.

" ' This is the truth ; and yesterday this same worthy came to my house in the country, and engaged me to nurse the child. I was to come and take it away privately, no one being ever to know save her mother, her maid, and the surgeon. I came yesterday, but no entreaty could make her part with it ; and, in truth, I never pitied woman so much.' The bitter consequences were all represented to her in the strongest light. She saw shame, disgrace, and ruin, all impended over her devoted head, yet the affections of the mother prevailed. She assented to all their arguments, admitting the truth of them ; but yet she *could not* part with the boy. Sometimes she appeared to be yielding to their remonstrances,

and made an effort to give up the child; but in place of that, her arms involuntarily held him the closer, and pressed him again to her bosom, and, in the meanwhile, she cried so that I thought it would burst. It appeared to me that the lady had many sweet and amiable qualities, but that she had been grievously misled by a deceitful selfish villain; and I cannot tell you how much I pitied her, and how much my heart was on her side. I advised her, too, all that I could, to give me up the child, but, I assure you, it was out of no selfish motive, only I saw no other mode of saving her from utter ruin. I beg your pardon, sir, but I must just tell you what I said. 'If you keep that child and nurse it,' said I, 'you are undone for ever. If you give it up to me, your husband will never know, and you will live happily and respectably all the rest of your life with him.''

"'I'm singularly obliged to you, honest woman,' said I, taking off my hat and bowing very low; 'particularly obliged to you, indeed, for the *honour* you intended

me.' And then I made faces, and shook my head, as if I had been exceedingly angry with her; but for all that, I was not angry, but coincided in her sentiments entirely, and wished that my wife *had* given up the child, and that I had never known a sentence about the matter. What a man knows nothing about, can never do him any ill, cousin Joe. However, the woman only laughed at my affected and impotent wrath, and went on.

" ' Well, the doctor, her seducer, her mother, and myself, had a long consultation after we left her; and it was resolved that we should all meet together at the same hour to-day, and take the child from her by force, even though it should be found necessary to put her in a strait jacket, and bind both her hands and her feet.—Pray, sir, do not play the madman here. See, there are some stragglers of passengers who will observe us. Restrain your rage until you meet with the proper object to wreck it on, and then, I pray you, give it full scope. My relation is done. We had met

in her room according to appointment, and waited but the arrival of another gentleman, who was in the secret, to put our design in execution; and though, I believe, it would have broken her heart, it was intended as an act of mercy. The doctor, who is a good man, and a man of honour, though steady to the secrets of his profession, had already intimated our design to her, when you came in and knocked the whole scheme on the head. I shall lose my nursing hire, which was to have been a very liberal one, but, at all events, I have had the pleasure of setting an honest and simple gentleman right in what concerns his honour.'

" ' You shall not lose all, my woman,' says I. ' There is a guinea-note of Sir William's for your information. And, now, Lord have mercy on the dog of a married lawyer, for I will have none!'

" She thanked me very modestly, and with the greatest courtesy; and as she was going away she turned back and said, ' Now, sir, you must not take it ill if I say, that I think your lady has been grossly abused,

and that she has many sweet and amiable qualities. But, Lord help you, sir, you do not know what we women will do for a man who gains the ascendancy over us! Really we ought to be pitied; for we are as much in his power as the flowers of the field, that he walks over and treads down at his will. I therefore think, if you could arrange matters so as to take her home, and forgive her, you would never repent it. We have all need of forgiveness, sir, and if your secret errors were as much exposed as hers have been, there would be some need of forgiveness on her part too.'

"'There's another guinea for your advice, my woman,' says I. 'You never said truer words, or words more to the purpose, and, depend on it, I will not lose sight of them.'

"I then left the honest nurse, after shaking hands with her most cordially, and bidding her farewell. But it never came into my head to ask her address, and she might have been a useful woman as a witness. I ran across the hollow towards the

Theatre, but before I reached it I found my knees shaking, and my whole frame so overcome with vexation, that I was unable to ascend a flight of stone steps that I came to without holding by the wall, and there was I obliged to stand and breathe, leaning my head against a corner. I am ashamed to tell it you, cousin Joe; I am not sure but I shed a great flood of tears. This had the effect of settling my brain somewhat; for before that, I was fairly deranged, and left my head spinning round. The thing that affected me most, was grief at having let go the lawyer. I felt him always uppermost in my mind, like the taste of an unsavoury dish, and O how I did long to slice him in pieces! I staggered over to your lodgings in Thistle Street, accounting myself sure of one who would assist me with his advice; but when I called, I was told that you had gone into the country on some melancholy occasion, and none knew when you would return. I felt then as if I had been in a wilderness, not knowing a single individual in town. Fain would I have found

out my wife's lawyer, and scarted his buttons, but the thing appeared to me impossible without your assistance. I might, perhaps, have compelled my wife to give me his direction, but I was not sure if I could, nor how far I was safe in going there again, without perilling mine honour. Therefore, I have returned home to Burlhope, as unhappy a man as ever was born, and without your advice, only determined on one thing, which is, *to be revenged on the lawyer*. I could easily find in my heart to forgive my wife, seeing that it was pure and unadulterated love that was the cause of her undoing. But it goes exceedingly ill down with me that my first son, who is to be my heir, should not be mine. This is a pill I can hardly swallow: For you can easily see, that the son of such a creature as yon little bristling lawyer, would be a very unfit man for our Border meetings. Simey Dodd might actually come to have a son that would swallow him up. I will send a man and horse all the way to Bellsburnfoot with this statement, and beg an answer from you

by the bearer. I will meet you in Edinburgh, or anywhere you please, for I am burning with impatience to have something done in this shameful business. And am,

DEAR COUSIN,

"Yours ever, RICH. RICKLETON."

LETTER II.

"DEAR COUSIN DICK,

"I HAVE read the singular narrative made out between you and the worthy and ingenious Master of the Academy, whom I honour and admire; and it appears to me, at first sight, that there can only be one mode of proceeding in the business, which is, at once to part with your wife. Can it ever go down with your high Border spirit, to marry the cast-off mistress of a poor petty-fogging lawyer, and adopt their bantling as your heir? You have been inveigled into the former, therefore it behoves you to resent it, and take the benefit of the only redress left you. This is what you must

make up your mind to, and act in it with steadiness and determination. I will manage the whole business for you, and get the articles of separation made out ready for signature.

"As to the challenging of her seducer, I see little concern you have with him, but you may do so if you list. For my part, I would account the fellow who would embezzle his kept-mistress's fortune unworthy of such an honour. I will make inquiry into the circumstances, and write you from Edinburgh, where I intend being in three days at farthest. And am,

Your most obedient,

"JOSEPH BELL."

LETTER III.

"DEAR JOE,

"DO you think I will not make up my mind, and stand steadily to my purpose in this business? Depend on it I will! Sooner than that brat of the lawyer's shall be laird

of Burlhope, and a trustee on the turnpikes here, I'll tell you what I have resolved on. I'll sell my land and my leases; and as I hate the bankers of Durham for refusing my bills, I'll have all my payment in their notes, and, to be revenged on the dogs, I'll burn their trash of paper, bunch by bunch, at the cross of their shabby town. I'll discard the lawyer's mistress and his son for ever, if the law will do it for me; for you have roused my spirit to the hottest indignation. But none of your quirks to bring the lawyer off from fighting me. He is good enough for killing, and kill him I will, or he shall kill me, which I think he is not qualified for. I have many *concerns* with him, and each of them a quarrel on which I am willing to stake life and death. Firstly, for the wrong he has done to his own wife,—I will fight him on that score. Secondly, for seducing a poor widow's only daughter. Thirdly, for embezzling her fortune after he had her at his will. Fourthly, for his seizure of *my* wife, and for coming into her own apartment with

ropes and a strait jacket. Do you think I would suffer that, if she were worse than she is? Was she not my wife at the time? And, lastly, for mocking me personally, and telling me that his bastard was my son in the eye of the law, and many other impertinent things. Pray, cousin, scart his buttons for me directly, if you can find him out, which you may easily do by his way of speaking, for he cannot begin a sentence without saying, 'Mhoai, Mhoai.'—["Learned sir, deter your friend from this battle; depend on it, that, as Horace says, *Flebit et insignis tota cantabitur urbe.* A. T."]

"*Sicut ante,* RICH. RICKLETON."

LETTER IV.

"DEAR SIR,

"COME to Edinburgh without farther delay. I have every thing in a fair way for bringing about the intended separation,—have notified the matter to the unfortunate

woman, who is entirely resigned to your will, and means to offer no impediment, and have also discovered her seducer, who certainly deserves the rod of correction as richly as any one I have known. For my part, I'll take no hand in it, having got myself into both trouble and disrepute with your brawls formerly. I cannot, on any account, appear as your second again; but you will find plenty who will stand by you in such a case here, who are as fond of a little mischief as you can be for your life. Yours, &c.

"JOSEPH BELL."

THE following letter is dated from Edinburgh, and addressed to "Abram Tell, Master of the Academy, Ryechester." It is written in a very peculiar old hand, having been evidently dictated by Richard to an amanuensis, whose style of composition is as remarkable as his writing.

LETTER V.

"DEAR MR DOMONIE,

"As I did promise unto thee, so do I also hereby set myself to perform. And, behold, are there not many things whereof I have to speak? But fret not thyself in anywise, for as yet hath there no evil befallen to thy servant. When I descended upon this great city, I did seek out the abode of my friend, even of Joseph. And I said unto him, Wilt thou not go forth with me to battle against this man of Belial? and he said, I cannot go. But, behold, there is one John, the son of Rimmon, who is related to the nobles of the land, and he has been a man of war from his youth upward, lo, shall he not go forth with thee to battle? And he said, I will go. And I wrote unto the man that did go in unto my wife, saying, Hast thou not wronged me, in that thou hast betrayed the woman of my bosom and wasted her substance? See thou to it; for I have found thee out, O mine ene-

my, and thou shalt answer to me with the life that is in thee, for the honour and virtue which thou hast destroyed. Therefore, come thou forth with thy sword in thine hand, that we may look one another in the face, at such place as the son of Rimmon shall appoint. And John, the son of Rimmon, went into the house of the man, but, behold, he was not there; and he left a piece of parchment, having my name inscribed thereon, and nothing beside; and the man hath fled, and to-night we set out in pursuit of him to a far distant city, from whence thou shalt hear from me; and, behold, am I not thy servant?" &c. &c.

The next is dated from Glasgow, and addressed to Mr Joseph Bell.

LETTER VI.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am requested by our friend, who, it seems, is slow in the art of penmanship, to inform you of our proceedings; and I do

assure you I never had such sport in my life, nor did I ever meet with such a character as your cousin. He is set on battling as he calls it, and his spirits always rise, or fall, in proportion as he supposes he is near, or distant from, the scene of action. I have had the greatest difficulty in keeping sight of Mr Shuttlecock the lawyer, in this city, and am now thoroughly convinced that it was not, as his clerk pretended, any business that brought him here, but that he merely fled from the face of Mr Rickleton. He had alighted from the coach on entering the city, and gone off with a porter; after calling at every inn and hotel in that quarter, I could find nothing of him, and, not knowing him personally, I began to suspect that all my searching would be in vain.

"In the meantime, the irritated husband was all impatience, and was running about the streets the whole day in search of his man; for he always asserted, that he never would forget the rascal's face, nor mistake it, as long as he lived. Had you seen him going biting his lip, and looking into every

gentleman's face who was about the size he wanted, how you would have been amused! I often followed him at a distance to enjoy the scene, and observed many young gentlemen sore surprised at the looks he gave them, who also followed him with their eyes, and did not seem to recover their equanimity for a good space. Last night, to my astonishment, he came not in to dinner, at which I was not a little chagrined, for I deemed that I had traced the fugitive, and wanted your friend's signature and acquiescence in my proceedings. At a late hour I received a card almost totally illegible, intimating that I would find him at the guard-house, where he needed my assistance very much. I went, and found him in confinement, on a charge of assault and battery; and the account that he gave of the business was the most original I have heard. I shall try to give it you in his own words, as nearly as I can recollect, and I am certain I have not forgot many of his expressions.

« ‹ Whoy, mon, I was rooning and roon-

ing about,' said he, 'looking for my woife's lawyer, and, whanoover I could see a noomber of people, there I was shoore to be in the moodst of them; and at length I foonds me mon joost going snooking over soome of his law papers.

"'Hoo-hoo, friend!' says I, 'is this you?' says I.

"'Ay, to be shoore it is,' says he.

"'And do you know I's very glad I has found thee?' says I.

"'Ecod so!' says he. 'Thank you sir,' says he.

"'I suppwose thou knows that I has a bit of an account to settle with thee?' says I.

"'Yes, I doos,' says he; 'and it is poot to your charge but not extracted. You can call and settle it some other time.'

"'No, rabbit it, I'll settle with you before we part,' says I.

"'Thank you, sir!' says he. 'What were the articles I foornished you woth?' says he.

"'Nay, it is nwot for the article foornish-

ed *me*,' says I, 'for that I mean to retoorn to thee hand. It is for the articles foornished to me woife.'

"'Thee woife, sir?' says he.

"'Ay, me woife, sir,' says I. 'Noo, I will bet that thoo'lt deny thou ever knowed sooch a lady as Mrs Rickleton of Burlhope? or a Miss M'Nab? or that thou ever foornished her with anything besides a set of rwopes and a strait-jacket, which I saw myself?'

"'Mrs Rickleton!—Miss M'Nab!—I am rather at a lwoss, sir,' says he.

"'There's to help thee memory, then,' says I, knocking his hat off into the doorty rooner. But me man was game. He flew at me nwose like a weasel, and he cworsed and swore mwost fearfully. 'Cwom, cwom, me fine fellow, I'se glad to see that,' says I, 'for I should not have liked that me woife had been seduced by a fugicock.' Then I gived him such a breaker that he toombled into the doorty siver; and I keecked him and toombled him over the bwody, and he rwoared out, 'mwordcr!' but I employed me

time as well as I could, till the officers came and apprehended me. And now they have meade a very oolfaurd stwory out of it, and they dwon't believe a word about what he has dwone for me woife.'

"'But are you quite sure of your man,' says I, 'Mr Rickleton? For I flattered myself that I had ferreted him out elsewhere.'

"'Ooh, shoore of my man!' exclaimed he—'That I am! Rabbit his bloode, if I shall ever forget a bit of his feace as long as I live!'

"I went the next day to hear the parties examined. The wounded man was brought in a chair, and appeared to be fearfully mauled. His statement differed little from that given me by my friend; only he said the gentleman charged him with furnishing some insufficient articles to himself and his wife, which the complainant could not recollect, and he was convinced he had mistaken him, (the complainant,) for another man; for, on his going home, he had caused his clerk to look into his ledger, and it con-

tained no such names as those mentioned by the aggressor.

In the meantime, there were no questions put to the complainant relating to his business, or whence he came, which I wondered at, but did not interfere. Rickleton was brought in escorted by two officers; and the account that he gave of himself set the whole court a-laughing, but the judge was always obliged to inquire at others, 'what he was saying?' His broad Northumberland tongue, with the innumerable gutturals in which it was involved, rendered his language quite unintelligible to the worthy Glasgow magistrate, to whom he gave himself up as an English squire, a freeholder, a trustee on the roads, and tenant of an immense extent of land, all in one breath. He denied nothing with which he was charged; but, when he came to state the offence received, the whole house, not excepting the judge, fell into convulsions of laughter. You may easily conceive the import of the charge, for it was of such a nature that I cannot write it, but not one of

the visible muscles of his face moved. On the contrary, he grew quite angry; his face reddened to a flame; his tongue faltered, and the thread of his accusation grew altogether inexplicable.

" ' Let me understand you properly,' says the judge. ' You state yourself as a gentleman of property in Northumberland, do you not?'

" ' Yes, I doos, sir,' says Richard, in a loud offended tone.

" ' And do you reside on your property?'

" ' Yes, I doos, sir. I have resided there all my life.'

" ' And do you accuse this gentleman of debauching your wife and embezzling your property?'

" ' Yes, I doos, sur; of debauching me woife, and embezzling *hur* property, sur. *Hur* property.'

" ' Well, these are heavy charges, sir, if you can make them good. Mr M'Twist, what say you to this?'

" ' I say, my lord,' said the complainant, ' that I never was in Northumberland in

my life, nor, as far as I know, within fifty miles of it.'

"'I never said thou wost, and be cworsed to thee,' cried Richard, in a great rage. 'It wos befwore that thou didst all the evil. And, mwone, did'st thou nwot try to fworce thy bearn upon me by swome quurk of thee law? And did I not catch thee in me woife's own bed-room with a strait jacket and a fank of rwopes to bind her?'

"'I never heard anything so atrocious as this in the course of my life!' said the judge. 'Mr M'Twist, was this really true?'

"'Not a word of it, my lord. I assure you there is some mistake on the part of the gentleman, as I said at first. Let him state time and place, and I shall prove an alibi.'

"'Prove a what?' cried Richard, in great wrath.

"'Pray, suffer me to put the questions myself,' said the judge. 'Mr Rickleton, are you sure of your man? Will you make oath that this is the gentleman who wrong-

ed you in the affections and fortune of your wife?'

"'Yes, I wooll, sur, whenever you like, and as often as you like.'

"'And, pray, whom do you suppose this gentleman to be?'

"'Whoy, a dog of an Edinburgh lawyer—Mr Shootlecock.'

"'Well, sir, it so happens, that, to my personal knowledge, this gentleman's name is M'Twist; and, instead of being an Edinburgh lawyer, he is a master-tailor in Candlerigg Street, in this city.'

"Had you seen your cousin's face when he heard that it was a Glasgow tailor whom he had attacked and beaten! You never saw, I shall be bound to say, so perfect a picture of disappointed revenge, and humbugged chagrin. He could not look the judge in the face, but turned his head first the one way and then the other, to the great amusement of a crowded court. He at length found utterance in bitter recriminations.

"'Wod rabbit the clipped soul of him!'

exclaimed he. 'Whoy but he tould me that he was a tailor? If I had known that he was a tailor, I'll be cworsed if I would have touched him with one of my fingers. He deserves all that he has got for his stoopidity. Whoy, after all, I must beg the gentleman's pardon. I has been guilty of a foolish mistake.'

"The Glasgow tailor was a man of spirit. He claimed no damages, but forgave all freely. He was afraid that the accusation related to his honour, in having furnished goods of an inferior quality, which charge he was resolved to clear himself of. But, since it had originated in a mistake, owing to some unfortunate personal resemblance in him to one who had used the gentleman so ill, he was content to suffer the consequences.

"The judge highly commended the tailor's generosity; and then, turning to Mr Rickleton, he gave him a severe reprimand for the rash and ungentlemanly attack made on an innocent man, and advised him, in future, to seek satisfaction in some more

prudential way, that was not liable to such mistakes.

"Richard told him broadly, that he had come all the way from Northumberland to Edinburgh to challenge the gentleman who had wronged him. But that, on receiving his card, he had fled the city, and that he had followed him here for the same purpose; but, finding that he was skulking, and durst not shew his face, he was on the look-out for him, and, thinking he had found him, he was determined not to quit sight of him again, as he had once done before. This confession was unfortunate. Richard was bound over to keep the peace, and the next morning the whole affair appeared in the papers, so that I suppose the little lawyer may hug himself in safety for this bout. I am going to try to find him out, however, and, if he has spirit to take a trip out of the county, I will risk the restriction. As for Richard, he will risk anything to be revenged on him. You shall hear from us to-morrow, or as soon thereafter as we

have accomplished anything worth detailing. I remain, Sir,

" Yours most faithfully,

" JOHN M'KINNON.'

LETTER VII.

" DEAR SIR,

" THE lawyer, as Richard calls him, has fairly shown the white feather again. I found him out, though the pains that he had taken to conceal himself were almost beyond conception; but I effected it by offering a small reward to the porter who would find me out the different men of that fraternity who had been employed to carry his trunk from one place to another. I challenged him to mortal combat, in your cousin's name, on which he had no other shift but that of denying his own name, and all knowledge of the injuries complained of. But he was in such a terror that I was actually sorry for him, and, when I proffered to bring the redoubted Rickleton face to face

with him to prove his identity, I thought the poor man should have fainted. He said he had no knowledge of either the one or the other of us, and ordered me out. I was obliged to comply, but told him, that he should not escape in that way. In a short time I brought Richard, and, without telling him aught of the circumstances, placed him in a situation where he could be seen from Mr Shuttlecock's windows, and, leaving him there, I desired him to wait for a short time till I returned. There I suffered him to pace about for half an hour, meaning to prevent the hero of the law from leaving his lodgings till I could prove his identity, which I had found a cue to. But the sight of the herculean Northumbrian had been too much for his nerves, for, when I called again with a client of his, he had made his escape by a back-door, and since that time he has returned no more to his lodgings. As I do not think him worthy of any farther pursuit, I have posted him over all Glasgow, and request that you will do the same in Edinburgh, that he may no

more be able to show his worthless face. When a fellow assumes a rank so distinguished as the one in which he moved, and, at the same time, commits acts which he dares not show his face to answer for, the sooner he is chased from society the better. Richard is terribly out of sorts. He accounts the posting no amends whatever. He says, 'What the dooce signifies your boots of printed paper? I would not give a tooch of a boollet or a good sword for fifty thoosand of them.' Yours, &c.

"JOHN M'KINNON."

LETTER VIII.

"DEAR COUSIN,

"I AM going into East Lothian for two or three days, to try to recover part of an old and very large debt. I pray you to get all the formalities settled regarding my separation from my wife, for I am determined to make an example of her, to deter all other women from imposing on men

again in the same manner, from this time to the end of the world. I will make her to feel the extent of the folly she has committed, and turn her off to be a byword and a reproach among all her sex. I have shut up my breast against pity, and yet there is something very extenuating in her case. She was seduced when very young, when her seducer was rich, and moving in high life, and she poor, and moving in low life, and on the pretence of marriage too. I account nothing of this, it was almost a natural consequence. But, after he had slighted her and married another, that she could not shake herself free of him in any other way than by marrying me, is what I will never forgive, and I long exceedingly to see her face to face once more, to give vent to the whole of my indignation. How I would brand her with infamy! If her conscience is not made of the fore-skull of a lawyer's head, I shall wring it, and it would give me a great deal of satisfaction to see her writhing under the lash for the dishonour she has brought on me. What

I should do next, I scarcely yet know, but my spirit is moved at this present time to do something highly recriminating, for, you know, I am apt to run to extremes in everything. Lose no time, dear cousin Joe, in bringing this business to an issue. This letter, you will perceive, is in a lady's hand.

"R. R."

LETTER IX.

"DEAR JOE,

"I have engaged the Domonie to give me a day's penmanship, in order that I may be enabled to give you a detail of all the events that have happened to me since I was last in Edinburgh. I know that you will have been expecting some explanation, and it is proper and right you should have it, after all the trouble I put you to in settling the terms of my divorce, or act of separation, as you were pleased to call it. Perhaps you will be offended at me for the part I have act-

ed, and I think myself it was wrong; but what is disreputable to one man is quite consistent with the character of another. An act that would damn Dick Rickleton, if committed by an Edinburgh lawyer would only raise his character as a glib, shrewd fellow, that knew how to cheat or hoodwink his neighbour, and without that character they find but little employment. And, on the other hand, a thing that would send a lawyer to Coventry, as they say, would only exalt the character of Dick Rickleton, as a good-hearted, honest fellow. Having given you this previous explanation to prepare you for what is to follow, I shall now proceed to particulars.

"Notwithstanding your prohibition, I determined to see my wife before I left Edinburgh; for I found a spirit of insulted honour and abused affection burning in my breast, and I could not renounce the only opportunity I might ever have, of giving vent to them, and proving to her that her once fond husband, Richard Rickleton, Esquire, of Burlhope, was not a man to be

insulted with impunity. I studied every cutting reproach that was to be found in the English language, and treasured them up to pour upon her head; and, in a special manner, I intended to dwell largely on the Seventh Commandment, and to represent to her the meanness of her error in taking up with *a married lawyer!* a knave, and a coward.

"Well, away I goes, rather early, perhaps, to call on a lady-nurse, it being between eight and nine in the morning; but the damsel of the house would only speak to me across a large chain, such as they have at the prison-doors, which I thought proud treatment; and so I says to the lass, 'I'm thinking, hinny,' quo' I, 'that ye haena aye keepit that ousen-sowm linkit across the door when the men came to gie ye a ca'?' That made her look two ways at once, and she said nothing. 'Never ye mind, my woman,' says I. 'There are some things that, when once they are done, it is not easy to undo again; and, in that case, the doers maun just make the most of them

that they can. Hae, there's half-a-crown to you, go up the stair and tell Mrs Rickleton that her husband wants to speak a word or two to her, before he leaves town; that he insists on it, and is determined to take no denial.'

"The lass went, as desired, but still without taking the chain off the door; and, after waiting ever so long, she returned, and said the lady was scarcely in a condition to be seen at present, but that she begged I would return in the afternoon, and that I should then see her. I was obliged to promise—what could I do? So I went and put off the day the best way I could, but I durst not call on you, nor so much as come to the side of the town that you dwelt on, for I knew you would disapprove of the violent measures which I purposed; therefore, I dined at a coffee-house, drank two half-mutchkins, and, going to my appointment, was admitted at once. My wife was up, sitting by a fire in her bed-room, and dressed in the most decent and becoming style. She held the child on her knee, and the lit-

tle rogue was all flaunting with muslins and laces. I entered full of passion and fury, but in all my life I had never seen aught half so beautiful and innocent-like as the mother and the child; and as I saw her eyes shining through tears, I had not the heart to begin my system of abuse. However, I plucked up my spirits, and put on a brazen face; and I says, in a stern, offended voice, 'Well, Mrs Cathrine, I suppwose I's no very welcome visitor here?'

"'Indeed but you are welcome, sir,' said she; 'and I am very happy at having this opportunity of speaking a few words to you, as I may perhaps never have another!'

"'It is not very likely that you will, madam,' says I. 'Not very likely indeed. For, once I have told you a piece of my mind, I intend bidding you farewell for ever. You have behaved in a fine style!'

"'My behaviour has been such that there is no treatment too bad for me,' said she. 'But I have been more sinned against than sinning. Love alone was my error, but unluckily my love was first fixed on one

who was capable of turning it to the worst of purposes. From the moment that I was first led astray, I repented and loathed myself for my weakness; yet, for all that, I found myself entangled in mazes of deceit and falsehood, from which it was impossible for me to make my escape. It was to disentangle myself from the snares of a villain that I engaged myself with you, not being then aware of the state to which I was reduced. Now, it seems that my whole fortune is at your disposal; and your cousin has made out articles, ready for our signatures, which would have been quite fair, and liberal enough, had that portion of my fortune that is assigned to me, been tangible. But you know the greatest part of it has been lent to my betrayer, and where is the probability that I shall ever be able to recover it? The certain consequence, then, to me, is, that this poor, friendless, outcast boy, and I, will at once be cast on public charity. Now, as I have no reliance on any person but you, and know your goodness of heart, I must entreat of you, that you will

make the settlement between us so as that I may be protected against sheer pauperism, the very thought of which terrifies me. What would you think, or what would you do, if this boy and I came begging to your door?'

"'What would I do?' says I, hardly able to contain myself. 'By G—, I knows well enough what I would do.'

"'Spurn us from the door, without doubt,' said she.

"'I would see you both d—d first,' says I; and I was blubbering, I fear, or some such ridiculous thing, for I could not endure the thoughts of the woman that had lain in my bosom coming begging to my door; and therefore, before I could proceed, she looked seriously at me, and asked me why I was so much affected?

"'I's nwot the least affected,' says I. 'I hates all swort of affectation as I hates a bully. Thou doos not say that I's affected?'

"'I only asked what you would do, if this boy and I came begging to your door?

You would not take us in sure, and protect us?'

"'Would I not, Kate?' says I. 'But cworse me then if I would not. Ay, and give you the best and beinest seat in the house too!'

"'Well, I believe you would,' said she, 'for you have a kind and forgiving heart. But why, then, not take us under your protection at present, before such extremities arrive, as arrive they will? I feel that I cannot live an outcast in the world, without some one to protect me; for, from the little experience I have had of my own management, I know I should soon be destitute; and then what would become of me?'

"'Well, what would you have me to do?' said I, for I did not know well what to say. And I found that all the severe animadversions which I had studied were in danger of being lost. 'What would you have me to do?' says I. 'Would you have me to take you home to my house and my bosom as I did formerly?'

"'No, no, I am not so unreasonable as

that,' said she, 'and if you were to make me such an offer I would not accept of it.'

"'The devil you would not!' said I; for I found myself nettled at such a reply, and somewhat disappointed. I expected she would have said, 'Yes,' and I know not how I should have refused her; but, when she said she would not accept of such an offer, I found I was safe, and had nothing to fear. 'All that I want,' continued she, 'is, that you will not cut me off with any set portion, but grant me such an allowance yearly as circumstances and casualties may require. I have no dread to leave the matter entirely in your option; only I cannot endure to be cut off from all mankind, and to have no one even to *think of* as a protector.'

"'I never thought of such a thing, Kate,' says I, 'else the divorce should never have been sanctioned by me. But I can easily enter into your feelings; and therefore let my cousin present you what scrolls and parchments ever he likes, do not you subscribe one of them. For I here promise

to you, on the honour of a trustee, (on the toornpikes, I mean,) that you shall never want as long as I have. And, if my word is not sufficient, I shall give you what other security you choose to ask.'

" ' Sufficient!' exclaimed she; ' ay, it is sufficient to me for a thousand times as much!' and, with that, she sunk down on her knee, and, holding the child on her left arm, with her right hand she took hold of mine, kissed it, and shed a flood of tears on it. Lord, cousin Joe, I did not know what to do! You must excuse me for all the follies I have committed, for I was quite overcome, and actually stood puffing and crying, like a great lubberly boy that had been sent to drown a litter of pups, and was obliged to bring them home again from a misgiving of conscience. Our lucrative and high-wrought plans of a permanent separation were all blown up by a woman's breath, and a woman's tears. Still they were those of a lovely one, that you must confess, with all her errors. ' Your word is sufficient to me for a thousand times as much!' cried she.

'And now may the Lord of Heaven bless you! and I know he will bless you, for this yielding kindness to a poor hapless sufferer. Now I have one on whom I can count, to my heart at least, as a protector, and but the very last minute I had none. Some fond thoughts found their way into my bosom, that perhaps this son of sorrow and shame that lies at my breast, might live to protect and support his mother. But the prospect was a distant one, and then how did I know but he might live to curse me? O that was an insupportable thought, but it was one of those that the guilty feel. Now, sir, I have gotten much more than my request of you, and so far beyond my demerits, that you are repaying me good for evil, and therefore, before we part for ever, I bless you once more in the name of Heaven.'

"If you could have stood proof against this, Cousin Joe, you are made of sterner stuff than I am. But I need not say that, for a lawyer is proof against everything, except the bullets of convenience. For me,

my fortitude was lost, and all my stern remembrances of wronged love and confidence beside.

"'Katie,' says I, 'as far as I remember, you are the only person that ever blessed me in the name of God. My father often cursed me in that name, but I knew he meant no ill, honest man, by these curses, and I took them as pleasantly as they had been all blessings. I must say, that I feel it a delightful thing to have one's blessing so heartily as you have bestowed it to-night, especially the blessing of one that has offended and wronged me, and, by this hand, I want to have a little more of it. Katie, you were talking but now of parting for ever. That is a dreary long term, and one that I never can abide to think of. What would you think of a plan by which our separation might be of a shorter date? Or what would you think of a plan by which we were not bound to separate at all? Rabbit it, woman! Once for all, send away that brat to the father that begot it, and

come away home with me. You are my wife, in spite of all the laws and counsels of men, and my wife you shall be. Send away the child to his own father, and you shall never hear either of their names mentioned by me again while we two live. Now I have gained a victory!' cried I, clapping my hands, 'and let the world say what it will! If it were not for the taunts of Simey Dodd, I don't give a twopence for all the rest of the world. There I will be sadly humbled. Never mind! never mind, honest Dick! You will, perhaps, get something for which to laugh at Simey in your turn. Hear, then, what I say, Kate. Send the boy to his rascal of a father, for I cannot endure that he should be heir to my estate, and come with me, and be my lady, my wife, and my darling, as you were before.'

"'No, believe me, sir, I cannot do it. If you would make me mistress of the world, I cannot do it,' said she. I thought the woman was crazed, and grew as rigid as a statue, through utter astonishment. But

she went on. 'You are the most benevolent and forgiving being that ever breathed the breath of life, but I cannot again bring dishonour to your house, and your bed. And, moreover, it is not in my power to give up this boy. I see him a helpless and guiltless being thrown on my care, shunned by every one else of the human race. I refused to give him up to his father, on which he has taken witnesses, and entered a protest, and, if I cherish not the child, there is none on earth now to do it. Poor little innocent! He is an outcast both of God and man; for, owing to his father's circumstances, as a married man, I cannot get him introduced into the Christian church. No reverend divine will, out of pity or commiseration, pronounce a blessing on his unhallowed head, bestowing on him the holy ordinance of baptism.'

"While she said this she kissed the babe, and shed tears over him in abundance. I could not help joining her in the crying part with all my energy, for in all that relates to women and children my heart's

butter. 'Beshrew their hearts but it is a hard case!' says I; 'and the devil a very much I would care to get him baptized myself, and be d—d to him.'

"Deeply as the mother was affected at this, in spite of all she could do, her crying turned by degrees into something like laughter, and that of the most violent kind; and then it changed into crying again, and then into laughing, I know not how oft. I felt disposed still to follow her example, but I could not contain my passion, and so I went on.—'Is it not a hellish thing, that, because a woman is made beautiful, and simple, and loving, that therefore she is to be betrayed and degraded, and then abominated and kicked about, as she were not fit to live on the face of God's earth? Mankind may do so with the rest of womankind when they like, Kate, but I say, I'll be d—d ere they shall guide you so!' And with that I gave a tramp with my foot that made the joists of the house crash like eggshells, on which my wife screamed, and in an instant her old mother and the maid

rushed in between us, where they stood, holding up their hands, and muttering—'Hout, hout!—What, what, what!—What's astir? what's astir?' But I never so much as saw them, so full was I of my own conceptions and resolutions, and so I went on.—'No, I'll be d—d if they shall! and I'm not given to cursing and swearing. But let the world say what it likes, and let Simey Dodd of Ramshope say what he likes, I'm determined to gratify my own humour.—Ah, it is a bitter pill to swallow that!—the giving of Simey fairly the upper hand of me. He will sit king of the dales now, next to the Duke of Northumberland. Well, I cannot help it! I'll perhaps get day about with him yet. I am not disposed to wish ill to any man, but I do wish from my heart that Simey Dodd would fall into some tremendous scrape with the women. Ha-ha-ha! How I would rejoice, and laugh, and clap my hands!'

"'I think ze honesht man hish been making razher free wi' zhe bottle,' said the old toothless wife, making her head move

like an apothecary's sign between her daughter and me.

"'Not a bit,' said my wife. 'You think, mother, you see before you a half madman; but, in place of that, you see one with many of the qualities of an angel.'

"'An anshel!' said the old wife—'be me sooth, an' a gay ramshtamphish anshel he wad be!'

"'I will be sore kept down,' continued I; 'I will hardly dare either go to kirk or market for a season. But why should I? I have done nothing that I need think shame of; and, as long as I can answer to my own conscience, I will laugh in Simey Dodd's face, the little d—d chit!'

"'Eh? eh? What'sh zhe man shaying?' said the old wife, greatly alarmed.

"'I say that I will take home my wife with me in a chaise and four, for all that is come and gone yet, and acknowledge her as my wife to her dying day. And I will take home her hapless boy with me too, and give him the education of a gentleman.—Ay, will I; I'll take the vows on myself

for him; and let me see the eye that dare wink at him, or the lips that dare cry boo to his blanket! Now, what think you of that, you old witch?'

"'Oh, meshy pesheve uzh! What'sh zhe good lad shaying? Ish zhe gaun to make a'shingsh upagain? Am shoozh ma doughzh muckle ableezhed; poo woman! she has had an ill mischanter. But zhe Lwod'sh aye meshiful to hizh ain!'

"'Hold your peace, you old reprobate!' said I, jocularly, slapping the old dame on the shoulder; 'hold your peace, till I say out my say.—I say your daughter is my wife, and shall be my wife. All injuries are forgiven, and I will make more of her than ever. And, hark you, old dowager!—for every young Northumbrian that she brings me, I will send you a present of a hundred pounds, in good Sir William's notes!'

"'Oh, I wush muckle luck to your fieshide, gudeman! I wush zey may gow up like olife plantsh about youz table zhound!'

"'Ay, it is a good old wife's wish, with a sound leaven of self in it,' said I. 'But

now, Katie, my poor misused and broken-hearted woman, what do you say to all this?'

"She again took my hand, and kissed it, and then said, as her sobs would let her, 'What can I say, but that you have bound me your slave for ever? My heart is so full, I cannot thank you. I rejoiced to place my dependance wholly on your generosity, but I never thought the human mind capable of such an act of generosity as this. I can say nothing, but that I am your slave for ever.'

"'Not my slave, Kate,' cried I, 'but the lady of my right hand; and with this kiss I cancel all animosity, and thoughts of injury received, which, indeed, on my part, never had any existence.'

"Cousin Joe, I have brought home my wife. I have forgiven her, and taken her to my bosom; and, whatever the world may think, I have already enjoyed the deed more than all the other acts of my life. I lived in anguish for a few days, out of dread of the taunts and scorn of my great adversary, Simey Dodd; but one morning, before I was

out of bed, the servant-maid came and tapped at our chamber door; 'What is it, Esther?' says I.

"'It is a gentleman who wants to speak with you, sir.'

"'A gentleman who wants to speak with me at this time of the morning!—Who is it, Esther?' says I.

"'I think it is Mr Dodd of Ramshope, sir.'

"'Good Lord! What am I then to do?' exclaimed I, addressing my wife. 'You may rise and face him up yourself, Cathrine, for sutor me if I will!—I'll creep in below the bed, or fling myself from the window, and make my escape—Anything in the world but the encountering of Simey Dodd!'

"I rang the bell violently. 'Esther, tell the gentleman that I am not at home—that I cannot be seen either to-day or to-morrow, for that I am more than a hundred miles distant.'

"'He has sent his horse to the stable, sir, and is sitting in the dining-room.'

"'Confound the fellow!—I wish he

were dead! What has brought him here to torment and crow over me to-day?'

"Finding that I had no other resource, I put on my clothes, and went into the breakfast room, uncertain whether to encounter the cutting taunts of my great antagonist, or strike out at the very first. Simey could not repress a smile when he saw me enter, for I was biting my lip, and looking exactly as if I wanted a quarrel, and expected one. He, however, rose, and shook my hand, and asked me how I did, in so kind a manner, that I was somewhat moved to accost him in the same style.—'Why, neighbour Simey,' says I, 'I can guess the purport of this visit to-day—It is for no good, you rogue! D—n it, you have me on the hip now!'

"'No, I have not,' said he; 'it is you who have me on the hip; and from this day, and this hour, I succumb to you, and acknowledge you my superior.'

"'Whaten way?' says I. 'None of your quizzing, Mr Simey; for I know you too well of old, to suppose that you are aught

lowered in your own estimation by anything that I have achieved. On the contrary, sir, I know you are come to exult over me, and humble me to the very lowest extremity.'

"'You never were more mistaken in your life,' quoth Simey. 'I have always been accustomed to brag you about everything, merely on purpose to keep you down, for I thought you sometimes were inclined to exalt yourself too much; but there is my hand, I shall never do it again; and he who does so in my hearing had better let alone.'

"'Thank you, Simey,' says I.—'But rabbit me if I comprehend this!—it is so much the reverse of what I expected, that I can hardly believe that I am awake; or, if I am, that it is possible you can be serious.'

"'Believe me, I am,' said he.—'You have done a deed of generosity, of which I was incapable, and which proves you, with all your obstreperous oddities, to be possessed of a more gentle, forgiving, and be-

nevolent heart, than almost any other of your sex.'

"'It is not an act to be made a precedent of, Simey,' says I.

"'No, it is not,' said he—'I know that; but still it ennobles *you*. I, for my part, esteem you so much for it, that I profess myself bound to you, and I will stand by you, and support your honour on that ground, as long as I have breath.'

"'Simey, you are a better fellow, and a braver fellow, and a kinder fellow, than ever I thought you before,' said I; 'and your approbation affects me so much, that I feel very much disposed to play the woman and cry. But oh, Simon! I am afraid you do not know all, my good fellow. There is a child in the case, Simey!—Oh, man, there is a boy in the case!'

"'Yes, I know all,' said he; 'and so much do I admire your conduct, with regard to that child in particular, that you will not guess for what purpose I have ridden all the way from Catcleuch here today?'

"'I cannot possibly guess,' said I.

"'Just to request of you that you will suffer me to stand sponsor for that boy at his baptism,' said he.

"I then took Simey in my arms, and blessed him in the best way I could; and, ever since, the ewe and the lamb are not more gracious than Simon Dodd and I.

"We had a good rousing drink before we parted, and we have had several since. When we get a certain length, we sometimes take a touch at bragging still; but we always part and meet as brothers, which we seldom did before. Thus has my greatest bane been also removed; and I have no hesitation in saying to you, Cousin Joe, I AM HAPPY. I never knew what social happiness was before. It is so sweet to be beloved and adored by an amiable being, whom one has rescued from degradation and misery—whom I find disposed even to hold my foibles and faults in estimation; but, as I know that springs from condescension on her part, I am doing all that I can to get

the upper hand of them, and expel them from the mansion of Burlhope for ever.

"Thus has ended your great maiden law-plea, as well as my sublime remonstrance on the impropriety of breaking the Seventh Commandment, especially on the part of the women.

"DEAR COUSIN,
Yours ever, most affectionately,
RICHARD RICKLETON."

IN the foregoing tale, or rather in the three foregoing tales connected into one, I have, in conformity with my uniform practice, related nothing but facts, as they happened in common life. Every one of the three leading incidents, on which this narrative is founded, is copied literally from nature, the circumstances being well known to me, and to all those dwelling in the districts in which they happened. To such

as may trace any of the tales to the original incidents, it is necessary for me to say, that, as they will perceive, I have thought proper to *change some of the names*, in order that I might not lead the public to gaze too intensely into the bosoms of families, or pry into the secret recesses in which their holiest feelings are treasured up from all but the eye of Heaven. But in none of the groups have I altered *all* the names, and some of these but very slightly. I have also been obliged to make a few fanciful connexions and relations that did not exist,—such as cousins, sons, &c.—in order to combine the simple portraits of life and manners in one group. If any of these slight, but voluntary deviations from truth, are discovered, I have to request that due allowances may be made.

I have now only to ask, IS NOT YOUTHFUL LOVE THE FIRST AND THE GREATEST PERIL OF WOMAN? I have shown, by a simple relation, all founded on literal facts, that, by yielding to its fascinating sway, she is exposed to the loss of life—the

loss of reason—the loss of virtue, of honour, and of happiness. What can be more dreadful? Yes, yes, my beloved countrywomen, of this rest assured, that on the first motion of placing your youthful affections, depends the future happiness and welfare of your lives. Read the calendar of female woes and sorrows from the foundation of the world, and you will see, that to one point the main sum of these can all be traced—namely, to MISPLACED AFFECTION. How many thousands of lovely and amiable beings, fitted by nature to have ranked on the scale of creation next to the sphere of angels, have, by this one step, inconsiderately taken, been plunged into an irremediable course of guilt, shame, and misery! And how many thousands of precious and immortal souls have thereby been ruined, and utterly lost! Let me then implore of the gentle maiden, who shall deign to read these red-letter morals of the mountains, that, on the first breathings of youthful affection, when the ready blush first mounts to the cheek, and the radiant eye begins to

sparkle brighter at the sound of a certain manly voice—let me implore of her then to pause, and say to herself, "What am I doing, and whither is my fantasy leading me? Let me beware, lest I be now entering the precincts of THE FIRST AND GREATEST PERIL OF WOMAN."

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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